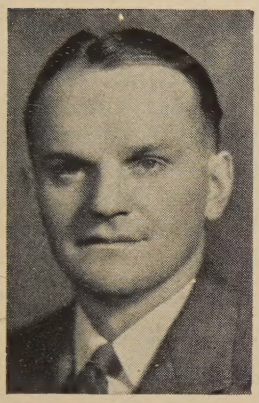
The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



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GRANGER E. WESTBERG **20** CHURCH WORSHIP AND STUDY

VOL. XXIII, NO. 6 JUNE, 1952

By Robert S. Eccles

SHOULD THE PREACHER

UNLESS Protestant Christianity is restored to sounder spiritual health, there is no guarantee that it will survive the sturdy rivals of a vigorous, self-assured Catholicism and a strongly secularized culture. A disturbing sign of the poor spiritual health of Protestantism is the ignorance of many Protestants of the basic facts of the Christian religion. Biblical literacy tests show that large numbers of college students are unable even to name the four Gospels. (See B. Frederick West's "What Do Students Know About Religion?" in the *Christian Century* for September 13, 1950.) A national survey of the religious attitudes of the American people reveals the most disturbing ignorance of elementary Christian teachings. (See Lincoln Barnett's "God and the American People" in the *Ladies' Home Journal* for November 1948.)

What is to be done to correct this religious illiteracy? It is the thesis of this article that the problem must first be attacked by the minister of the local church in his proper capacity as Christian teacher.

The uncompromising assertion that the minister must also be a teacher may elicit a sharp reply. When in the twenty-four hours of a day is he to find time to be a teacher? In the average church he is the only trained professional leader. How much more thinly can he spread himself? The minister of a large city church may have the assistance of a professional staff, but such churches are still in the minority. Nevertheless, regardless of the church's size, the claim stands: the minister must be its principal teacher if the problem of religious illiteracy is to be solved.

This becomes clearer when we examine the nature of Christianity. Christianity is a historical religion. It is centered in a person, Jesus Christ, who lived at a definite time and place in history. Christians are convinced that Jesus brought to its climax a historical religion much older than himself, namely, the religion of the Hebrews. More than that, the beliefs and practices of the Christian church, the community centered in Christ, have developed and grown through the centuries. Protestant Christianity represents a special tradition within the whole Christian church. If new Christians are to be adequately nurtured within the church, they must first be properly introduced to the Founder of their religion and to his teachings. This means that they must be educated in the Bible. If the Protestant tradition means anything, then Protestants must be educated in their tradition. This means education in church history and Christian doctrine.

ROBERT S. ECCLES is assistant professor of New Testament and church history at the Indiana School of Religion, Bloomington. A 1944 graduate of Garrett Biblical Institute, he shepherded congregations in Vermont and as acting chaplain of Stanford University and as a teacher at American University in Washington, D. C., before coming to his present position in 1949.

More Than an Emotional Experience

But it is precisely in Bible, Christian church history and Christian doctrine that so many Protestants are ignorant. Christianity is more than an emotional experience to be transmitted from one devotee to another. It is by its very nature also a body of important teaching to be received and comprehended by one generation after another. The minister is the one person who has had intensive training in Christian teaching. He presumably commands the facts of Christianity. But if, as present observations show, this teaching is not being passed on to lay Christians young and old, who but the minister is primarily responsible?

From the beginning of the Protestant tradition the sermon has always been considered the primary means of bringing the truths of God to the souls of men. Against the older Protestant tradition of theological and biblical preaching, how seldom the present-day preacher attempts in his sermon to be a teacher! This is not to bewail the passing of the Jonathan Edwards type of sermon, but rather to express serious concern over the inadequacies of the modern sermon as an instrument of Christian teaching. This inadequacy is illustrated by the use of the Bible in the average sermon today. If the sermon happens to be based on a scriptural text at all, rather than on a mere "sermon theme," the text becomes little more than a "pretext" for the sermon. The preacher usually has chosen his biblical text for the striking phrase it contains to illustrate his already chosen sermon theme, which itself may have come from *Reader's Digest*. This use of a text merely to illustrate a theme is not biblical preaching. Rare is the minis-

A challenging article on the pastor's responsibility as a Christian educator

ALSO BE A TEACHER?

ter these days who preaches on a text for the primary purpose of illuminating the Bible itself.

Again, very few preachers nowadays attempt sermons on major theological subjects such as the nature of God or the Christian interpretation of salvation. It is thought that the sermon must be "timely" or "inspirational," whatever that may mean beyond the starting of the sudden tear or the slight increase in the rate of respiration of the man in the pew. Sermons on "peace of mind" go well today, but neither preacher nor people feel obligated to search out the deep things of God "which belong to their peace" and which, as Gethsemane shows, is not necessarily divorced from bitterness and tears. The witty preacher is much commended, but a preacher who earnestly seeks to be the teacher of his congregation may sometimes have to conclude that the ready joke is impertinent to the illumination of the Bible, and that theological truth clearly explained does not require private wit to "sell" it to the congregation.

Witty Preaching is Not Enough

Why has serious teaching departed from the sermon? Is it because congregations prefer wit and the contemporaneous note in place of Christian teaching? My personal experience points the other way. Whenever I endeavor to preach a frankly biblical or doctrinal sermon I am usually greeted with words of appreciation which far exceed the conventional "I enjoyed your sermon." Such response comes as freely from simple, unschooled Christians as from the college graduates of the congregation. Most of our people are seeking the practical bread of Christian teaching rather than the glancing stone of "popular" topics. However, congregations long accustomed to the clever topical sermon may have to be patiently educated by the minister to appreciate serious sermons on the basic teachings. Yet Christians of every generation have found the basic truths of Christianity to be always timely, since they are timeless.

A serious cause of the neglect of the teaching function of the sermon is the mental laziness of the preacher. Careful people would hesitate to put themselves under the care of a physician who did not make an honest effort to keep up with medical literature and did not subscribe to standard medical journals. Yet they sit under the preaching of a minister who would be embarrassed if one inquired what journals of biblical, theological and historical studies are regularly on his study desk. The denominational papers are there, and the church management magazine is there, but where are the solid new works in Bible and basic Christian teaching? The trade catalogues of dealers in religious books list dozens of volumes of collected sermons, second-hand sermon outlines and books of popular quotations to one title of a serious study of the Bible or of theology. Books of sermons and sermon outlines are not usually found in the libraries of laymen, yet the market for them is steady. Who buys them if not the minister?

The Church's Growing Edge

The creation of an original sermon is hard work. All study is hard work. If the truth were more freely admitted, many a minister finds three hours of visitation, speaking at Rotary and attending meetings a less rigorous chore than three hours spent privately in his study. However, the principle still stands: the minister sets the standard of Christian education in the church.

Although the minister cannot personally do all the teaching, he is the inspiration and resource of those who actually conduct classes. If the teaching function of the whole church is primary in the minister's mind, he will transmit his concern and enthusiasm to his associates. If he does not treat Christian education as primary, few other people in the church are likely to do so. We speak of the church school as the educational "department"of the church. For administrative purposes this may be sound, but "department" suggests a partial and subordinate activity. But Christian nurture is not a subordinate activity. Christian nurture is the growing edge of the whole Christian enterprise. Without Christian nurture the church would be dead in one generation. That suggests a most forbidding question: Is the Protestant church really alive? The educational task of the church is crucial. It will not be fulfilled until first the minister, and then all the people, see it as the task of the whole church—the church service and of the church boards and societies as well as of the church school.

It must be emphasized that no matter how clearly the minister sees his educational task, he cannot perform it adequately without the support of Christian laymen. They also must be helped to see the educational task of the church. Before they can see it clearly certain habits of the lay mind must be overcome. Some Christians still are suspicious of religion "of the head" as contrasted with religion "of the heart." There was a time

when certain Protestant denominations frowned upon the professional training of ministers in seminaries as leading to the danger that men might come to the ministry equipped only with theological ideas and not a warm conviction of the heart. But one emphasis cannot be neglected at the expense of the other. In sound religion there is no escape from sound thinking.

Time for Study

Another hindrance to Christian education is the layman's common misconception of the minister's proper function. In today's church the minister is made the over-all general manager, financial promoter and public relations executive. Laymen often do not realize that it is a misuse of the minister's time and training to make him chairmen of too many committees, or to use him and his car for a taxi and delivery service. If the minister is to be the principal teacher of Christian truth to his congregation, then he must be permitted adequate time for study and the maturing of his thought for the benefit of all his people. He is not being unjust to his congregation when periodically he shuts himself in his study, away from all congregational demands except those of immediate emergency.

If the teaching function of the Protestant church is to be properly fulfilled corrections are necessary in theological education. Great stress is laid today in the seminaries upon "field work," which requires the student to gain experience as pastor of some small church or as a part-time assistant in a large church. The result is that for most seminarians there is never a week when their minds are entirely free to concentrate on their studies. Thus during their final period of professional training when they are supposed to be ripening their thought they are required to be "anxious about many things." It is doubtful that a young man is being properly educated for the demands of a preaching and teaching ministry who awakens tired every Monday morning after a busy week end of work in the parish, who studies and listens to lectures as best he can for the rest of the week with next Sunday's sermon on his mind, and who finally travels miles from the seminary the following week end to do pastoral work and deliver a not yet matured sermon pieced together largely from last week's lecture notes. The habit is thus established in seminary of treating study as secondary. It is no wonder that later in the parish the young minister fails to see Christian education as a primary function of his ministry.

The Ministry of Teaching

One final correction of attitude is required of both ministers and laymen in order that the cause of Christian education may be advanced. This concerns those who prepare for teaching, who perform their ministries not in pulpit and parish but in teaching courses on religion in schools and colleges. There is a curious prejudice in many minds that "minister" means only "preacher," and disregard of the fact that classroom teaching may be one of the most important ministries. Persons who choose ministries of teaching do so at considerable personal cost. Their education is long and expensive. Since they usually do not care to take pulpits their denominations do not quite know what to do with them, and they do not enjoy the denominational preferment to which active parish ministers may aspire.

But it is in the classrooms of teaching ministers that the disturbing religious illiteracy of our times comes to light. This widespread deficiency makes it urgent that more men prepare for ministries of teaching to serve the increasing number of inquiring students who seek in the classroom that basic knowledge of Christianity which too often has been denied them in the local church. Yet denominational officials do not encourage men to prepare for ministries of teaching, apparently from apprehension that the church may be robbed of preachers.

The religious illiteracy of Protestant Christians is a serious thing in this day when the Protestant church is required to prove itself. It is faced by a vigorous Catholicism which denies the basic principles upon which Protestantism stands. It is confronted by a rationalist secular society which is no longer impressed by the worn shibboleths of purely emotional religion. Most serious of all, Protestantism has within its own ranks faithful people who do not know what they believe, nor what to believe which may sustain them in an age of worldwide peril and doubt. "But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?" Make no mistake about it, the preacher who will be heard today is the preacher who is a teacher. It is largely to ministers that the treasures of Christian knowledge have been committed. "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required."

Lost Steeples

Have we lost the steeple? That challenging question is presented in the story about a small girl who became lost on her way home from school. She had left school by a different door than was her custom. The kindly teacher found her sobbing hysterically and muttering something at first incoherent to the teacher: "I lost the steeple!" Suddenly it dawned on the teacher that at the other entrance to the school one could see the towering spire of a church steeple. So she led the little six-year-old girl to the other side of the school building and the girl was immediately oriented and found her way home.—*Luther W. Youngdahl, Federal Judge, District of Columbia, and former Governor of Minnesota.*

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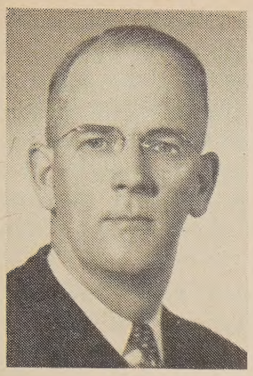


Christ's Call to Youth

By Alfred W. Swan

And Jesus looking upon him loved him.—Mark 10:21.

A WORKMAN finished a beautiful job of new sidewalks and then went up to the house to report. On the porch he said to the lady, "There's the smoothest job of cement work you ever saw." Then, turning around to point to his work of art, he saw four children tramping on the new sidewalk, gleeful at the marks their little feet made. He emitted a string of impolite words. "Why, John," said the lady, "I thought you liked children." "Yeah," said John, "I like children in the abstract, but I don't like 'em in the concrete."

Well, we oldsters are often like John. We like young folks in the abstract, but sometimes we don't like them in the concrete. But if you like them merely in the abstract and not in the concrete, then you are not qualified to work with them. If you do not thrill when you see a fine young fellow, lithe in limb and bright of eye and mind, or a lilting lass with intelligence to match her charm, you are not capable of leading youth. And if you cannot understand a young person who is battling with some handicap or wounded by some physical difficulty or psychological hurt, and if you are not moved with a great desire to bring that young person on the way to sound and healthful living, you are not a collaborator of the Master Teacher.

The distinctive thing about Christ's attitude in this famous case of the rich young ruler is that Jesus looking on him loved him. He may have liked his face. It is a fine thing to have a pleasing countenance. He may have liked his eagerness. This young man came running to him. It is a thrilling thing to meet a young man who is really after what is true and right. Christ no doubt liked his intelligence. For the young man asked the right questions: What must I do to inherit eternal life? And certainly he liked his general character and background, for he passed the examination with affirmative answers to all the questions about the rectitude of his record. What a man this young fellow was! It is easy to see how Jesus looking on him loved him.

'One Thing Thou Lackest'

But there was one thing this fine young man lacked. He had everything. But he wasn't ready to give everything. "One thing thou lackest; go sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Sounds like a hard saying, doesn't it? That's how it sounded to the young man, which is how we are like him. "His countenance fell, and he went sorrowful away; for he was one of great possessions." There are few sadder pictures in Scripture than this. Here was one whom Christ especially loved for what he was, and he could not give himself to the Master, because of what he had.

What is clearly portrayed here is Christ's call to youth. Or we may put it this way: Life looks lovingly and hopefully on youth. And it is saying: Give me everything. And youth is saying—well, what? Consider the picture, and flatter yourself that you are like this young nobleman, rich in all things. Just put it this way: You've got everything—what will you give to the Master?

Youth Has Everything

In the first place, consider the advantage of youth. In that case you will accent the last word of our general principle: You've got everything.

You know what it is when you see a young fellow about whom you can say, "He's got everything." He may be a fine athlete, and have so wondrously coordinated a physique he can shoot five out of six free-throws right into the basket. He may have brains, and a straight A rating, and all the advantages of a great university behind him. He may dress well. He may have "personality," which is the capacity to win admiration, attention and loyalty. He may have a good family, with a worthy record. He may have fine prospects in the profession he is about to enter or the firm connections he is about to make. When you look at him your heart may go all aflutter. But he may have all these things and still lack the one thing which it takes to make a man—the capacity to give these things away. Otherwise he's just an Arrow collar ad, and his career will soon go glimmering.

Or *she* may have everything. She has beauty of

ALFRED W. SWAN's sermon contains many helpful ideas and suggestions for the baccalaureate and commencement season. As pastor of the First Congregational Church of Madison, Wis., since 1930, he has ministered to thousands of students at the University of Wisconsin, whose campus adjoins his church. He is a recognized leader in his denomination and speaks frequently before youth conferences and church convocations.

face and freshness of countenance. She has wonderful hair. You can't tell which twin has the permanent. And she's got something beneath her hair. She's got brains. It takes brains, you know, as well as a hair-do, to get anywhere these days—or any day, from the pioneer girl who drove a four-horse team over the Oregon trail in ten months, to the air hostess who travels the same route in ten hours. She's got it. Maybe she has thoughts. You often wonder if women's thoughts are as beautiful as their faces. A beautiful heart is a wonderful gift. It beats charm and languor and nonchalance so far that it will outdistance every rival in the field. It is a thrill to come across a young woman like that, who has everything. She has every *thing!* You just wonder whether she has the final thing it always takes—the capacity to give all these things away, at the right time and the right place. Can it be said of her in the end, "Her fortress is a faithful heart?"

Once I say a young man in a theological seminary. He had everything—personality, brains stance, eloquence, power, and, we believed, sympathy. But some of us were fearful for him. We just wished he'd go out and spend the first five years of his ministry on the western slopes of the Rocky mountains, in the back yard of the continent, or in the needy slums of a great city, and see if he could learn the depths of the human struggle, and thereby patience and sympathy and love. For if you have everything, and have not love, you're just a glamor boy, that's all. And you will amount to nothing, just like that son of a noble sire who turned sorrowfully away, because he had great possessions.

The Peril of Modern Youth

But if it is the advantage of youth that it has everything, it is the peril of youth that it has everything. You get the difference in meaning just by shifting the emphasis back to the possession. The peril of youth today that it has had so much handed to it that it never did anything for, that it does not realize the worth of what it so easily enjoys. Many young people are driving cars they never paid for. Don't be too inquisitive about how many adults are doing the same thing; only the finance companies can answer that. A radio comedian remarked the other day about these careless pedestrians who jay-walk across the street as if they owned the avenue. To which his partner quipped, "Yes, and you drive down the avenue as if you owned the car!"

You think you own the city's streets too. And you often litter them with icecream cups, candy wrappers, chewing gum and newspapers, until the vicinity of some of your schools becomes a disgrace to you. You forget at what price your city has been made beautiful. There have been more than a hundred years of struggle to build it from muddy, rutted roads to paved and planted boulevards. There were foresight and investment on the part of those who planned its parks and pleasure drives. There are taxes paid by John Q. Citizen, working hard between the ages of twenty-five and sixty-five to support everyone under that and over that. To carve your initials on park benches or church pews, to deface school desks and monuments in cemeteries, is to show the lack of appreciation and sensitivity which are the marks of a mature man or woman. And it's largely because these things never cost you anything that you value them so little.

Here's your education, which you think you earn at pretty great expense, the years of application and study. It is true, but the body of knowledge which makes up your education was won for you at the price of courageous investigation and laborious research. These are handed you on a silver platter. You are drinking from a sacred chalice. You drink of the water of life which is knowledge. This again says nothing of dear old dad whose taxes support your schools and colleges, and who, whether he can help you with your calculus or not, is glad to go on digging that you may have opportunities he never had. Nor yet does it touch upon the teachers who patiently wait for you to catch up with them in scholarship, citizenship, deportment and character.

Youth is in peril of not recognizing the values of the civilization it enjoys, that have cost youth so little.

Even your bodies have cost someone much. They cost the initial pain with which your mother bore you, and the long and patient care by which for years she could not be away from you, till you were on your own. They cost the vitality of a father who labored in garage or office that you might have the vitamins to grow three inches taller than he, and to win the relay in the very year his heart began to fail. Moreover, if you are an athlete, they represent generations of right living before you, and probably betoken ancestors who swung the ax in the forest, the scythe in the field and the hammer at the forge. And for you to take those vigorous and beautiful bodies of yours and waste them in riotous living, and to wash them down the gutters of the age with intemperate drink, is to sin against the sacrifices that have made you, and to reveal an unforgivable lack of appreciation. There is great truth in: "Ye are not your own; ye were bought with a price."

What Does It Take?

Youth takes for granted the freedom of this civilization, and uses it as license or oppression. It forgets that freedom was bought at a tremendous price. It was born through the long tutelage of law. And if men do not curb their appetites and passions and bring them into obedience to social concern, their freedoms will disappear in new despotisms.

Is it necessary to labor this point? We are all under an immeasurable obligation. And what is most to be feared is that youth today will be exactly like that young man in the Bible, who apparently was not aware whence his great possessions came. It is always true that a generation

that inherits a great culture is in peril, because it has not shared in producing that culture.

What, then, is the responsibility of youth? The answer to that is easy to state, though not so easy to follow. Have you got what it takes?

Do you lack the one indispensable thing, the capacity to give as you have received? Observe some of the things you must possess if you are to have what it takes to make a man of stature or a woman of beauty.

You must have discipline. And it must be self-discipline; for in the end no one will take the trouble to manage you if you will not manage yourself. The world just won't bother; it will pass on to someone else. Can you plan a schedule and stick to it? Are you orderly in your own room? Is your disordered desk a sign of an unorganized purpose and mind? "Order is heaven's first law." Can you discipline and deny yourself? Can you go without candy or fast for a day? Some people recommend that for Lent. We recommend it only if it will serve some purpose, like saving money for a CARE package to Poland. Can you be the captain of your soul?

Requirements for Success

You must have honesty. There is no substitute for this. And if you cannot be honest in examinations, it is highly questionable whether you will be honest as a bank teller or a congressman. It is all the same thing. Our society may break down if we cannot produce a breed of honest men. A highly organized society requires more honesty, not less, than a primitive one. Along with personality and possessions, have honesty.

You must have courage. If you don't think it takes courage to live in a world that is both foolish and cruel, you have another guess coming. It takes physical courage and it takes moral courage. The first may be conspicuous and applauded; the latter may be hidden and unnoticed. Can you stand alone? Or are you a jellyfish or an oyster, without any spine? Remember Daniel in the lions' den. Why didn't the lions eat him? Because the most of him was grit, and the rest was backbone. Courage is a beautiful word. It comes from the Old French, meaning "heart." Have you got a heart in you that can take it? Then you'll be a man, my son.

You must have courtesy. That is another beautiful word. It means courtliness. Its finer meanings are not confined to an aristocratic society; they are indispensable in a democracy—from the telephone girl at the reception desk to the filling-station boy at the corner, from the tycoon in the manager's office to the secretary of state. The highest principle of chivalry was *noblesse oblige*—to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required. To be courteous is to show appreciation of the gifts that have been given you.

And then you must have compassion. This is perhaps more important than all the others. It sums all the others up. It is the capacity to feel with and for others, and therefore to care. The world is dying for compassion, and a little bit of pity amid the regnant brutalities by which it builds its clashing spheres of power.

Now all these values have been built up for you by the Christ who has gone before you. What have you to give to Christ?

There are young lawyers who have dedicated their careers to freeing the slave, and protecting civil liberties from racial discrimination or political intolerance. There are professors who have seen the social and ethical relevance of their materials, and begun to do something about it.

Oh, there is so much before you to do—unlimited horizons. There is a student movement now known as Christian Horizons Unlimited. It lists 2,500 openings now for men and women in missionary service in 70 countries. It calls for ministers and evangelists, doctors and nurses, teachers and professors, nursery workers and dieticians, agriculturalists and business managers, electricians and radio operators and aviators. There is no end to the talent that can be used in extending the horizons of the Christian community. Horizons Unlimited—they lie before you. What are you going to do about it?

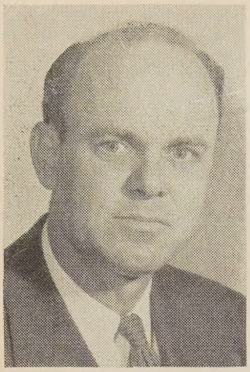
Christianity, dear young friends, is not chiefly something you don't do—although there are some things true men and women don't do—but Christianity is something you *do*. It is active, outgoing, outpouring, self-giving.

Well, how much will it take, Lord; how much do you want? It will take as much as or a little more than the young Communist gives to his party of discipline and sacrifice and obedience and dreaming—but of a very different kind. It will take as much as a soldier gives to his country of training and obedience and courage and sacrifice—but of a kind more exquisitely painful and beautiful.

But how much do you want, Christ? How much does it take? All that you've got, my son; all that you have, my daughter, everything. That's Christ's call to youth—and to you. You have everything, which is the reason you must give everything—*everything*. In this case it's a bargain at the price.

The Secret of Life

Suppose we turn to him who was the Master of life and ask him, "What shall I do with my life? What is the secret of living? What is the key I can use to unlock the entanglement of my existence?" Listen! That Master turns to us and says, "He that would be greatest among you, let him be the servant of all." If fighting bcomes an imperative, let it be done in a spirit of service. If we gain knowledge, let us glean it for the betterment of someone else. If we amass money, let it be used beneficently. If we must laugh, let it be the saving salt of society; if we must frown, let it become the balance that gives good government to our life. But supremely, finally, and above all else, let life's role be that of a servant.—*Melvin Hammarberg, Arlington Hill Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn.*



A Sermon for Fathers

By Kenneth L. Holmes

"I HATE my father, I hate him. My father is the most hateful man that ever lived. Why, I can't even say the Lord's prayer. I can't say "Our Father.' If God is like that, I don't want anything to do with him." These were the words of a teen-age girl as she sat across the desk from her pastor.

As Jesus applies this intimate family word to God, what a responsibility he places on every father! How much does the thought that God is a loving heavenly Father carry to a child's mind when he compares God with the father he knows at home? Any father who thinks this through seriously can never be quite the same man again.

The Influence of Joseph

What an admirable father Joseph must have been in his relationships with Jesus all through those hidden years at Nazareth. The man who answered when the tiny boy cried "Abba, father," was Joseph. We find out so little about him when we read the Gospels. He was a "just man," a man to whom God spoke revealing the name and mission of the child who was to be placed so mysteriously in his care.

Sometimes you can learn more about a man's personal life by studying the unconscious references to him than by any other way. The influence of Joseph is shown in that Jesus' use of the word "father" must have been colored to some degree by this family relationship in childhood.

Visualize Joseph in the carpenter shop in Nazareth as he works with the boy apprentice. Hear the father as he says: "Now, remember, Jesus, we try to make everything with care, nothing shoddy. My aim is always to make the best doors, the best yokes, the best tables in Galilee. Whatever you make here in our shop will reflect your father's workmanship." Such words become part of the inner life of the boy. He ponders them as he works day by day. Years later on a hill in Galilee we hear this same Jesus speak the immortal words, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." He urges us to aim for perfection "as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The influence of Joseph is seen even in Jesus' words about prayer in the Sermon on the Mount. Joseph must have been a father who heard the voice of the child. He must have been one who knew the boy so well that he could anticipate the most intimate yearnings. The central fact of Jesus' teaching is that there is a heavenly Father to whom we may confide in quiet and in private. The Lord God is not a Father to whom we must shout or whom we need to nag. "When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." It is a great relief to learn that the word "openly" is not found in the oldest documents of the New Testament. The reward of God is more often an interior approval than an outward one. It would have been enough for Jesus to have Joseph's smile of approval for a job well done.

The Security of a Good Father

Jesus must have known a family life in which the children had the security of knowing that the basic needs were understood and anticipated by Joseph and Mary. Luxuries were probably missing, but the real needs were taken care of. The picture of that calm, firm, disciplined figure of Joseph must have been in the background as Jesus transferred the picture to God. "Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' " Don't you realize that "your heavenly Father knows that you need them all"? Jesus' cure for anxiety is trust in a heavenly Father, who, like Joseph, anticipates the deepest needs of his children.

We turn to the parable of the prodigal son. Here the setting is a typical Jewish home, although undoubtedly a more prosperous one than that of the carpenter of Nazareth. The central figure of the story is the compassionate father who cannot wait for the erring son to return from the far country, but who sees the lad coming in the distance and goes out to meet him. There is a modern story of a young man in a strange city who went to a minister to seek his advice. The boy had run away from home several months before and was afraid to go back. The minister read the parable of the prodigal from Luke's Gospel and suggested that if the boy went home, his father would probably greet him just as the father did in Jesus' story.

KENNETH L. HOLMES has been pastor of the First Baptist Church of Moscow, Idaho, since 1948. He also serves as the university pastor among Baptist students at the University of Idaho for the American Baptist Convention. A graduate of Berkeley Baptist Divinity School in 1945, he is the vice-president of the state convention of his denomination.

The boy went home only to be refused admittance by his father, and was sent back into the far country. Jesus' parable is not intended as a guide to the nature of human fathers but to the nature of God. Yet we can feel that Joseph would have fulfilled all the requirements of the story.

The kindly figure of Joseph comes before us again as Jesus asks, "What man of you, if his son asks him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent?" Then he goes on to cary the implications of such a question over into the realm of our understanding of God. "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him."

What an intriguing trio—Joseph, who served as earthly father during Jesus' boyhood; the Lord God, who was revealed by Jesus as the loving heavenly Father; and Jesus Christ himself, the Son of Man and the Son of God. How significant the word "father" becomes as we seek to understand the meaning of the incarnation of God in the life of man. What if Joseph had not been found faithful in his dealings with the boy? Would the word "father" have meant what it did for Jesus? How would he have represented God to us?

Many a child today learns that Jesus taught that God is a heavenly Father. Slowly, inevitably the little head turns, and all-seeing eyes look at an earthly father, and then the question: "Is God like that?"

The Evil that Good Can Do

By Fred E. Luchs

Satan is transformed into an angel of light. II Corinthians 11:14.

MAN eager to do good stoops to evil. To let goodness reign man looses the forces of evil and gives them free rein upon earth where they bring tribulation, sorrow, destruction and death. Few men among the millions stoop to purpose unrighteousness. Most men wish to establish good. Even the Communist wills good. He wants to see all men across the world supplied with bountiful food and good homes, enveloped in security and happiness. But to accomplish good we often use evil means.

If we knew the areas in which we did evil in the name of good, we might not fall into the pit. I have but one point to make: Good becomes evil when people falsely assume that their institutions, conventions and associations are perfect. They go on to reason that what they do in the framework of "perfect" is perfect. Man reasons: My religion is perfect; therefore, what I do for it is perfect. Think of the wars in the field of religion. Each side considered itself the possessor of truth; therefore, the enemy possessed error. The "infallible" group must kill error, i.e., kill the enemy, who are people. In the name of good, man inflicted torture and cruelty upon the enemy. In the Crusades both Mohammedans and Christians believed their cause holy because they were helping to recapture sacred places.

Remember the Spanish Inquisition. The church of Spain tortured and killed those who refused to follow its mandates. Condemn the Spanish Inquisition as you will; its leaders felt that it was bringing God's mercy upon the earth. They reasoned: Better that the victim burn here than hereafter. "If we torture the victim," said the Inquisition, "convince him of his errors, and lead him to conviction that the Roman church is the only way to truth, we shall be saving him from everlasting damnation and hell's fire. Therefore, if mere earthly torture can bring the victim to his senses and save him from hellish torture, the Inquisition is a kind and benevolent institution."

Religious Arrogance

In Roman Catholic countries Protestant freedoms are curbed. Witness Spain, Portugal, and the countries to the south of us. Our Protestant brothers in South America are having a rough time of it. If you tried to reason with a Roman Catholic brother and said to him, "In Protestant countries where you Romans are in the minority, as in the United States, we give you full freedom. Why don't you give us similar freedom in countries where you predominate?" He would answer, "My Protestant friend, you don't understand. You are in error. We Romans hold the truth. You Protestants have a false religion. Therefore, God ordains that we should prevent you from having full freedom where we predominate, but that we should have full freedom where you predominate."

In the name of country man commits evil. Man reasons: My country is perfect; so what I do for it is perfect. Think of Stephen Decatur's famous

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FRED E. LUCHS is the minister of the United Church at Los Alamos, N. M. A graduate of Franklin and Marshall College and Seminary, Lancaster, Pa., he served pastorates in that state and in Ohio before coming to his present congregation in 1951. He has traveled abroad and is in wide demand as a speaker before student audiences. His articles have appeared in a wide variety of religious publications. He also serves as an associate editor of The 20th Century Quarterly, a religious education publication of the Christian Century Foundation.

statement, "My country, right or wrong." That kind of language sends men down the road to evil. If you killed a French citizen on the streets of your town, you would take the shortest route to the electric chair, but if you killed him in battle, your country would decorate you.

Political Hysteria

Think of that government official accused of making money during the war on government orders. His reply was, "My only loyalty is to my president and to my country." A man can be loyal to his president and to his country and still be a scoundrel.

Congressmen are immune from charges of libel. A man sitting in that great body can make statements about his fellow Americans and not be held accountable. But some men are elected to that high office who take advantage of this privilege. Recently a congressman made a fool of himself and brought disgrace upon the honored halls of Congress by his libelous statements about a group of fellow Americans. He made the headlines for weeks, throwing fear into the hearts of innocent men. In the name of good that senator put in motion a wave of hysteria whose evil has extended until now and whose effects may engulf many honest people in the days to come.

We do evil in the name of good by our reverence for periods of history. By our belief that the status quo is divine we may hold back progress. We think today's customs and laws are perfect. We allow men and women to suffer. We refuse to eliminate injustice because we believe God sanctions our conventions. God ordained all existing evils, so why fight them? In the name of the status quo men upheld slavery, dueling, lynching and infanticide. Any period of history can be wrong. What will the judgment of 1975 say about the evils of our status quo?

Good may turn to evil when we reverse the past. We reason that the present must be evil because it does not coincide with the past. If the past was perfect and the present differs in any iota, then the present is evil. We love the past and fight any change which deviates from it. But had we lived in the past we now revere, we might have opposed the past. We might then have longed for a period a century earlier. Many who boast of their 100 per cent Americanism might have been 100 per cent British in the 18th century. The men of 1776 were radical revolutionists. They defied history. They scoffed at the past. The people who loved the past were in Philadelphia entertaining the British who upheld taxation without representation and the divine right of kings. The men who defied England in 1776 were a radical lot whose spiritual descendants in 1952 may not be respectable. That last sentence is a question. Will you ponder it?

What I have been trying to say Jesus said much more pungently. Recall how he spoke to some men who revered the past in Matthew 23:29-31?

Jesus very frankly, in paraphrase, said to these good people, "Although you worship these men of the past, you are the children not of those prophets whom you revere, but of criminals who killed the prophets." Men ought to revere a period of history, but they revere it too late. Why wait a hundred years before we honor social righteousness? Why worship history to the point where we hold back progress and justice today?

We commit evil in the name of good by our innocence of association with good institutions. "I belong to the church; therefore I am a good man"; "I am an American; therefore I stand for justice." A housewife said of a young freshman who was renting her front room: "I know he is a nice boy because all his towels have 'Y.M.C.A.' stamped on them." That landlady innocently labeled the boy good because of his association with a Christian institution, not knowing that the only way you get a Y.M.C.A. towel is by stealing it. By associating ourselves with good things we come to the false conclusion that what we do is good. The sharp cutting edge of our conscience is dulled if we believe that our allegiance to a religious institution makes us good. Good becomes evil when good alliances numb our moral sense.

Good turns to evil when we convince ourselves that we belong to the right and proper class and so can do no evil. Communism makes the proletariat, or working class, a divine society. All other classes should bow down and worship it. At the extreme other end is George F. Baer, who in 1894 told the strikers (who were living in an industrial hell) not to worry about the future; the rich, whom God had ordained to rule over them, would not let them down. Since then he has been called "Divine Right" Baer because he thought it was God who gave the wealthy their vast possessions. We of the middle class may look with contempt both ways—above us and below us. We believe the rich have got their gains in nonvirtuous ways. We think of the poor as a disreputable lot. The poor, for their part, look with contempt upon both middle class and rich.

Social Respectability

People say, "We obey the laws. We pay our taxes. We vote the straight ticket. We abide by the moral conventions of the community. How can we do wrong?" They feel that their high respectability and their loyalty not to Christ but to convention saves them from traveling evil pathways. Men can be respectable in our society and still be anti-Christian. Such people are close to goodness, but yet so very far away. They think their respectability will protect them, when really it opens doors for evil to enter. They think they are good when they are merely unconscious of the evil they create.

The men who brought to Jesus the woman taken in adultery were good men. They observed the commandments. They genuflected at the right moments. They paid their tithes and carried out every iota of the law. In that frame of virtue they almost stoned a woman to death. Their goodness prompted them to do evil. Let each man pray for himself—lest he fall.

The Stubborn Widow

By Edouard Theis

Luke 17:20-18:8. Ecclesiasticus 34:21-22.

THE parable at the beginning of chapter 18 of the book of Luke should not be called the parable of the Unjust Judge but the parable of the Stubborn Widow. Widows are often mentioned in Scripture. Along with orphans, they stand for the most unhappy and often the poorest of human beings. Except for Ruth the Moabitess, the widows of the Bible are not named, yet they come to life more vividly from its pages than many another character whose name is given. We all remember the widow of Zarephath whom Elijah nourished in time of famine, the widow of Nain whose son Jesus brought back to life, and the widow whom Jesus held up to his disciples as an example of generosity—she who in giving her two mites gave all she had.

Here is another widow whom Jesus holds up before us. the widow of the parable in Luke 18. She is the victim of an adversary who wants to take advantage of her weakness. The author of Ecclesiasticus—a book that Jesus certainly knew very well—would have called such a man a criminal:

> Scanty fare is the living of the poor;
> The man who deprives them of it is a murderous man.
> The man who takes away his neighbor's living murders him . . .

He would make us here in Le Chambon think of a landlord who wanted to put a tenant out into the street in order to take in a tourist who could pay more.

Filled with a driving energy, the widow fights without violence but with a passion for justice and probably too with the fierce love of a mother who sees her children in danger. She protests, she implores the judge, this important official who regards no man, this superior being who does not fear God. And finally she makes him yield, this man with his cold intelligence and his untouched heart.

Jesus holds the widow up as an example. For us she must stand as an example of faith and prayer, showing us the goal of faith and prayer: justice and deliverance (the two are one).

For the widow, justice meant the re-establishment of the kingdom of Israel, the punishing of her oppressors, the conversion of all nations to the one true God. To us Christians, the justice which Jesus tells us to ask, to seek as hungry children cry for bread, to seek with the hunger and the thirst that God will assuage—that justice is the Kingdom of God.

God's Kingdom in Us

Lord, thy Kingdom come in us, in each one of us; for it is in our hearts that the great obstacle to its coming lies—in our human nature, self-centered, proud, faithless, adulterous, as the prophets said; our bondage to flesh and sin; our self-indulgence and self-pity; our need always to be right and to justify our actions; our avarice, greed, jealousy, rancor, hate and murderous violence. Thy Kingdom come to all humanity, thy justice come to all men in a society without classes, a family of equals, loving each other and sharing all things, serving each other in liberty, truth and love.

But how can we pray to God when we do not desire his Kingdom, either in ourselves or in our society? When we remain bound to our prejudices, to our wordly goods, to our vices? When we refuse to forgive, to love with all our heart our neighbor as ourselves? When we worship, instead of God, our own precious selves, our precious property, the mammon of unrighteousness? Let us pray in repentance that our hearts may be set free from all these things and that the Son of Man may come to deliver mankind from injustice, from the oppression in which the world is held by his adversary.

The widow shows us also how to pray: with faith and determination.

Faith is to believe, to seek and to wait for that which men believe impossible. It was impossible for that widow, all alone, to make the judge yield —a man who acknowledged ties neither with other men nor with God. Impossible things will come to pass if we have faith.

Faith gives us perseverance and determination in prayer. Why do we cease to pray for the deliverance of someone near to us or for the ultimate

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EDOUARD THEIS contributes our sermon from abroad in this issue. A native of France, he took his theological training under the Faculté de Théologie de Paris and at Union Theological Seminary, N. Y., where he was a Sloan fellow 1923-24. After that he taught in the West African Mission of the Presbyterian Church, the Madagascar Mission of the Paris Evangelical Society, and the College of Wooster, Ohio. Before coming to his present position in 1939 as headmaster of the Collège Cévenol, an international Protestant secondary school in the Haute-Loire, he was pastor of a French Reformed church in southern France.

deliverance of all mankind? Because we have ceased to have faith, or because we give way to our natural laziness. For our faith is impatient. It does not submit to the law of slow germination and growth, but insists on immediate results. It has no intuitive understanding of the miracles that God is preparing. Or we cease to pray because of opposition, which, far from always strengthening faith, stifles it with calumny, with lies, with slogans repeated a thousand times, with criticism and threats, with a persecution which in most cases does not allow its victims to become martyrs but instead crushes them, snuffs them out secretly, or, worse still, debases them, forcing them to abject confessions by horrible and inhuman methods.

How did it happen that the unjust judge did not force the widow into silence or liquidate her? How did it happen that the Romans did not silence Paul? The police, the prisons, the concentration camps of our day are better able to silence the witnesses to the truth. Yet still he who was crucified on Golgotha calls us to share his cross. His chosen ones are a band of stubborn people who follow him with perseverance, who are sometimes admired but more often despised or ignored, overwhelmed and broken, but who continue to the end to believe and pray.

Let us listen to what Jesus said about this parable of the stubborn widow: "And will not God avenge his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he be tolerant of their opponents? I tell you that he will quickly see justice done to them." If you then, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him. If the unjust judge finally meted out justice to the persevering widow, how much more will your heavenly Father deal justly with you and deliver you utterly. God the Father of all, the creator and master of all things, the Lord of history, God the holy, the just, the true and the good, is waiting only for our ardent and trusting prayers to bring about his salvation. And do we still doubt? Sustained by God, who is justice and love, we can meet all opposition.

Modern Unbeliefs

"Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, will he find faith on earth?" This conclusion surprises us. We expect an affirmation of certain triumph: faith and justice reigning ever more and more in the hearts of men. But men can turn away from God; unbelief can triumph on earth. It is certain that the Son of Man will come. But perhaps he will find no one to welcome him. Jesus did not say so, but he considered it a possibility.

Unbelief has many forms. There is the unbelief of the Christians who think themselves in good standing before God, who are sure of their salvation because they say "I believe" and perform their religious duties—but who love neither God nor neighbor, do not do the will of God, and whatever they pretend are workers of iniquity.

There is the unbelief of the seekers after pleasure, the materialists who love food, drink, luxury, riches, pleasures gross or refined. To these unbelievers Jesus adds those who let themselves be tormented by doubt and worldly care, asking, "What shall we eat? Wherewithal shall we be clothed, housed?"—those who spend their lives in a desperate search for security, in the fear of tomorrow. Perhaps a seed of faith was sown in them, but thorns—cares, riches, pleasure—have sprung up and choked it.

There is the militant unbelief, the materialism with scientific pretensions, which claims there is no God, no truth, no human brotherhood, but there is only the clash of interests and conflicting economies. If men are thus without hope and without God, governed by blind forces which oppress them, they will in the end destroy each other. And this end seems near at hand. Here is a new religion which inflames men and women, makes them fanatics, kindles in them devotion, and inspires sacrifices as well as countless cruelties. This religion, turned against God, is flooding a world that has been prepared for it by the half-heartedness and faithlessness of the church of Christ. Since the invasion of the Mohammedans, Europe has not experienced so overwhelming a spiritual crisis.

Through the alliance of this religion with a cultural, political and military totalitarianism, nearly half of the human race now knows a tyranny of body and soul. Young people are turned from the church, hardened against the Christian influence of their parents, indoctrinated with atheism.

Must we not recognize as a possibility that all these unbeliefs combined will bring about the result that Jesus feared—that when he returns, he will find no faith at all on earth?

We Must Not Bear Arms

We live in apocalyptic times. The cold war goes on and here and there erupts into open warfare. The world is drawn into the third armament race of our generation—and we remember where the first two led us. In this unleashing of fear, hate and violence, the church and we as Christians must not take part, must not bear arms. Our weapon is prayer, prayer for all. And the fruits of prayer are that devotion which was in the Good Samaritan, and a fearless speaking out of the universal and eternal truth.

So we must watch and pray. We must discipline our lives in order to come nearer to God, through worship, through study of his word, through bearing witness in our families and among all whom we can possibly reach. Let us read Christian literature and urge others to read it, in particular that book which comes to us from South Africa, *Cry, The Beloved Country.* Let us realize and help others to realize that in the chaos of today, the gospel is our only salvation. And may our vigilance be manifested by our gifts—doubled, tripled, increased tenfold—for the work of education, of evangelization, of the mission of the church. Though iniquity and unbelief flood the earth, may the Master when he comes find us ready!

The Christian View of Sex

By Vere V. Loper

Thou shalt not commit adultery. Exodus 20:14.
Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Matthew 5:28.

THE Christian point of view in regard to sex morals is based on the conviction that God himself is the Creator who is responsible for the division of life between male and female. His will for man is that he should live with one woman in a relationship designed for life. The expression of sex attraction in the physical sense should be limited to those two partners in their home. God's fundamental objective was the perpetuation and increase of life. Children represent the major reason for the existence of this home. Adultery is the major violation of it. It may be the act of persons who are married—as contemplated in the sixth commandment. It may be the inner attitude of persons who may or may not be married—as indicated by Jesus.

The Christian has ideals in sex relationships, and he associates these ideals with God. But these ideals are taking a terrific beating in our day. We face the inability of people who honor these standards to live in accordance with them. They are high standards—too high for many to apply. This has always been true and always will be true. In general, Jesus was kind and gentle with such people when they showed humility and a desire for forgiveness. When moral failure is faced in its inner essence, all must confess to thoughts and impulses which they would not shout from the housetops. Our Christian religion, undiscouraged by failure, is keyed to man's highest possibilities as a child of God.

The situation is more serious when it is said that because a Christian ideal is violated by so many people we must change our moral standards. Many take this position. They assert that a moral principle is like a social custom, it exists because it is accepted by the overwhelming majority of people at any one time and place. They deny the existence of unchanging standards. To them, morals, like words, are established by common usage. It is not what God says from Mount Sinai, but what the people say in any given society. A vast number of persons who maintain their high ideals in other fields of morality have yielded to the practice which violates the Christian ideals of sex. They know that the laws of physical health cannot be changed simply because some people violate them. But they are convinced that there is no moral universe or any unchangeable moral law which they are bound to honor. They write their own moral laws to conform to their habits and desires.

Twisted Ethics

In many cases this lowering of moral standards to conform to baser conduct is carried to the extreme by some psychiatrists and physicians who actually advise individuals to seek sex expression regardless of Christian standards. They are striking at real evils—some of which have been created by distorted religion. They are attacking unresolved guilt and vicious frustrations. But their twisted ethics and philosophy are hardly a cure for distorted religion. Self-expression which avoids all frustration is no substitute for religion which creates a sense of sin without a forgiving God to resolve it. Unresolved guilt is met by the effort to amputate the conscience. The possibilities of sublimating the sex drive into healthy and useful service are not explored. The result is an increase of immorality based on professional advice. The result is frequently, as one tortured soul expressed it to me: "That doctor got me out of the frying pan into the fire."

The final stage is reached when sex is isolated from the total process of life and discussed as merely a biological factor in life. The whole tendency of scholarship today is in the direction of the study of life as a unity which can only be separated hypothetically into its elements for the sake of study. Each major division is seen in its relationship to the rest of life. Some will assure the eager libertine that his sex expression can be kept isolated from his morality. I wish I could have the assistance of such persons in trying to straighten out the tangled affairs of couples, married or unmarried, who fell in love with the wrong person because they lived with the wrong person physically. If they are married, the fact that they were mated only on a physical level ultimately means divorce in most cases. If they are not mar-

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VERE V. LOPER is widely known as the moderator of the Congregationlal Christian Churches, the minister of First Congregational Church, Berkeley, Calif., and one of our editorial associates. His timely sermon grows out of his work with students at the University of California, where he has lectured on youth and marriage-related subjects for over a decade. His church has 1,600 members and is located within a block of the university campus.

ried, the woman is frequently left expecting a child by a man she has come to love, but who does not love her and will not marry her. Some women know whom they want to marry and how to bring the marriage to pass, and are far wiser in the interrelation of physical and emotional factors than learned males, babbling about biological aspects of sex to justify a life ruled by glands. The sex laxity of these amoral people is large in volume and tragic in its fruits.

So the truth is that the violation of Christian ethics in sexual relationships is not only staggering, but the causes out of which it grows are becoming more powerful all the time. The Christian needs to give continued testimony to his faith at this point and the reasons which underlie it.

An Act of Faith

The basis on which the Christian sets forth his ideals for sex is first an act of faith, even though he later submits it in a scientific spirit to the testing of experience. This act of faith is the conviction that God did speak from Sinai to say to all men, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." This word of God is not the arbitrary command of an Oriental despot masquerading as God. It is a Creator speaking for his creation. It is an inventor speaking for the machine he has invented. He is explaining to those who do not understand its intricacies that the machine must be handled in certain ways if it is to produce its full fruits. God's word is not apart from his universe. He speaks in revelation on Mount Sinai of the moral nature of the universe. He reveals to men the manner in which they can best cooperate with the realities of the universe which cannot be seen.

The second basis on which the Christian accepts Christian morality for the home is the biblical teachings as they have been clarified and amplified by the Christian church. Seeking guidance, we find that the teaching starts in Genesis with the basic concept that God himself is responsible for sex, having created male and female. The relationship of man and woman to each other in the home was made the primary human institution—"therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." These words of Genesis were made central later in what Jesus had to say of the home. The sixth commandment was a step forward in making loyalty within that relationship fundamental to its existence. The commandment was probably given for adult Hebrew males who were married. The status of women in marriage was attained by way of Jesus' outlook on women and children, but it has taken the church most of human history to attain the present Christian ideal of the relationship of woman to the home.

The central concept which Jesus added so far as adultery is concerned is that the basic problem is in the mind and spirit of man. The ultimate act has its origin and its most dangerous expression in the corruption of the heart. The person who looks upon a member of the opposite sex not as an immortal soul made in the image of God, but solely as a desired sex partner, has committed the sin of adultery in his heart. Jesus sought to cleanse the soul of man. Thus the teaching of the Bible is rounded out and the church takes its stand on the validity of that main stream of biblical teaching.

A God-Ordained Relationship

In the third place, we believe in our Christian ideal because the very nature of marriage, growing out of the command of God and the teachings of the Bible, demands those attitudes toward sex which the church teaches. To the Christian, marriage is instituted of God. The most sacred moment in the marriage services comes with the words, "those whom God hath joined together." The minister at his best does not conduct the service. It is a sacrament ordained of God. After these vows, it is inconceivable that one partner should be disloyal to the other in act or attitude. At the marriage altar, in the presence of God, they have answered in the affirmative the question, "Wilt thou . . . forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?" Even in distress, they have promised to be loyal to each other, "for better, for worse." The physical is present, as God intended it should be, but it is the expression of spiritual kinship. It forms the unity for which it is a necessary but subordinate part. The family is not designed primarily for happiness. The Christian has no "right" to happiness in the home or elsewhere. He cannot therefore use personal unhappiness as an excuse for adultery. But when he seeks to fulfill the conditions which the very nature of a Christian home imposes upon him, then he truly finds happiness, whether in the first bloom of the recently established home or in the tender care of a partner about to close the book of life.

The Moral Penalty

Finally, we believe in the Christian concept of sex relationship because the experience of the human race has justified the faith of the Christian. Faith must always submit to experience. The verdict of experience is clear and impressive at this point. Millennia of human experience have confirmed the essential truth of God's words through Moses at Sinai and Jesus in Galilee. Every answer dreamed up by man to the problem of relationship between the sexes has been tried: polygamy, polyandry, promiscuity, trial marriage, and all the rest. Sometimes we find a new name, such as "companionate marriage," for the discarded theory of sex. But everything has been tried. Experience proves that the noblest fruit comes from the Christian answer to sex—one man living in loyalty with one woman, rearing their children in the knowledge of God and the love of man.

The Russian Communists did not believe this when they launched their experiment. They abandoned completely the pattern of the Christian home and advocated free love. They made divorce and abortion easy. It has taken them a tragic generation to learn what the ages could have told

them. They have had the courage to reverse themselves in the last few years. Whether we desire to believe it or not, Russia is now one of the most difficult countries in the world in which to secure a divorce. She has returned to the essential pattern of the Christian home as the Communist ideal. The Russians have learned. I sometime wonder if we have.

Judge the validity of the Christian ideal of the home by the negative experiences which follow violation. Here are a few familiar snapshots: A holy value of life is spattered with mud. The glow of a lovely wedding is dimmed by the unexplained necessity for a quick marriage. A girl faces the vicious alternative of having a child outside of marriage or endeavoring futilely to correct one evil by the second evil of marrying someone where mutual love is absent and vows are a mockery.

Modern young people think they know the answer, but 50,000 unmarried mothers are registered every year and 10,000 die from illegal operations. These operations deprive a larger number of possible motherhood. Divorces are multiplied because a Christian home cannot survive known adultery. Women are unchivalrously compelled to get divorces which they do not want. Children are pathetically left in a marital no man's land between parents in a discordant home. A dark shadow intrudes when parents cannot even go to church together at the marriage of their child. Children are poisoned against one parent by the other parent. Women normally bear the heaviest burden, but fathers, drifting away from their alienated children, discover they cannot have their cake and eat it. Children, the innocent victims of parental discord, have their outlook sullied on the most beautiful and fundamental human relationship.

But the laboratory of marriage relationships has a happier formula. When the Christian ideals of the home are fulfilled, there is hope for the nation and a future for civilization. The church is built on the home. The home needs the church and does not fail to give it strength when a Christian ideal of the home is held. Young people who have wandered from the church turn to it when children come that they may attain the values which give dignity, meaning and glory to human life.

The relationship of two people in a Christian home means a growing love of which the love vow taken at the altar was but a dim suggestion. Each tries to make the other happy. Nothing needs to be hidden or secret. Lyoalty gives confidence. A sense of wonder and fulfillment comes with the birth of children. Maturing, they see in the life of their parents what a home can be. It is a goal for which they can strive. Children purge parents of much of their selfishness and bring out their finer qualities. Grandchildren arrive to complete the circle. When the fires burn down and separations come, the Christian has not only his memories of the past but his faith in the future.

That is the way God intends it to be. When the Christian pattern is followed, this is the way it is. An important fruit of such homes is the fulfillment of the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." They see him on the mountain saying through the ages, "Thou shalt not commit adultry." They see him saying in Christ, "A man shall cleave unto his wife." They see him in their own hearts saying, "Life is good when the home is good."

Titles and Texts

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

Albert E. Glock, Christ Lutheran, Normal, Ill. "Sign Language for Today." Luke 21:29-33—*And [Jesus] spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.*

Thomas W. Klink, chaplain, State Hospital, Topeka, Kan. "Mature Religion." Heb. 6:1 (Goodspeed)—*Let us therefore leave elementary Christian teaching alone and advance toward maturity.*

Guy E. Perdue, First Methodist, Iowa Park, Tex. "The Lord's Requirements for His Children." Mic. 6:8—*What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

James H. Carter, Lower Providence Baptist, Collegeville, Pa. "Be Somebody." John 1:12.—*To them gave he the right to become children of God.*

Palmer Steele, Associate Reformed Presbyterian, Brighton, Tenn. "We Never *Did* Do That." Acts 10:14—*Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean.*

Gary Bousman, Plymouth Congregational, Buffalo, N. Y. "The Meaning of Vicarious Experience." Isa. 53:4, 5, 7—*He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities . . . He was oppresed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.*

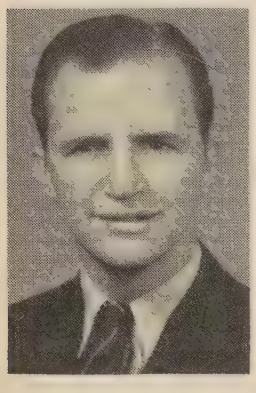
W. Franklin Harkey, Third Presbyterian, Washington, Pa. "The Society of the Redeemed." Acts 2:44—*And all that believed were together, and had all things common.*

The Ring, the Robe and the Shoes

By Darrel Berg

Luke 15:20-22.

RATHER than to attempt giving a verse-by-verse explanation of the old narrative which Charles Dickens once called the most beautiful in all literature, we shall evaluate the spire of meaning that towers over the structure of the Prodigal Son story. We cannot miss the fact that when the erring laddie came to himself, it was natural for him to arise and return to his father. We read: ". . . he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet."



" . . . put a *ring* on his hand." What does that mean? A ring has neither beginning nor end. It is a symbol of the love from which the boy never escaped. It is a token of the infinite. When with trembling hand the old man placed the ring on the lad's finger, he was saying, "My son, though you were in the far country, you did not escape from my love."

Francis Thompson tells us how he himself fled to that distant land, attempting to escape from the love of God:

> I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
> I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
> I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
> Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
> I hid from him, and under running laughter.
> Up vistaed hopes I sped . . .
> Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears.

But Love pursued him, and finally he confessed:

> Halts by me that footfall:
> Is my gloom, after all,
> Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
> "Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
> I am He whom thou seekest!
> Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

DARREL BERG is the pastor of Ronald Methodist Church in Richmond Highlands, a fast-growing suburb of Seattle, Wash. A former pastor of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, he graduated from Garrett Biblical Institute in June 1951 before coming to his present pastorate. His sermon reflects his strong interest in evangelistic preaching.

No man can flee from the love of God. Adam tried it, but in the cool of the day God came down to the garden and Adam heard his voice, calling, "Where art thou?"

Jacob tried it. He conceived of God as a tribal deity whose favor could be purchased for one side or another, but when he cheated his brother and fled he too was pursued. He lay down to sleep and as he slept he dreamed. Ah, there's the rub! In his dream he wrestled with the angel of the Lord.

Augustine tried it. But at last he confessed that man's relation to God was like that of a sponge to the ocean surrounding it, the ocean being in the sponge and the sponge being in the ocean, yet the one always finite, the other infinite. So, thought he, do we live and move and have our being in that love which is God.

No man can flee from the love of God. He may turn his back on the church, only to encounter that love in a wife or a child, for as St. John has affirmed, "God is love," and as Leo Tolstoy once entitled a short play, "Where love is, there God is also."

But the old gentleman has more to say: "Bring forth the best *robe,* and put it on him." Having returned from the far country, the boy must not be seen wearing the apparel of that habitation.

The Robe

To return to St. Augustine, we find that he was led to conversion by the words of St. Paul, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14). The figure is clear. The Christian is not to be garbed in the rags, strings and clouts of hate, greed, envy, malice and pride. He is to "put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts . . . and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24).

It was not fitting that the returning wanderer should still wear that which identified him with his past; so, says the father, "Bring forth the *best* robe and put it on him."

> Dressed in His righteousness alone,
> Faultless to stand before the throne.

Near the turn of the century in France, Émile Zola was pleading the cause of a young officer who had been banished to Devil's Island on suspicion of complicity with an alien power. At last he won a rehearing of the case, which resulted in a reversal of the court's previous verdict. Whereupon the officer's old regiment was reassembled, and in its presence a new sword was given the man and new insignia were attached to his sleeve.

During the First World War he became General Alfred Dreyfus.

Put on the new insignia! Put on the insignia that become your rank—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23).

. . . and Shoes

There is one further word: "And put *shoes* on his feet." This is the provision of the gospel—shoes on our feet.

When Moses called the tribes of Israel together for their benediction, he said to the tribe of Asher, "Thy feet shall be as iron and brass." He said nothing about the condition of the roads. He simply promised that they would be shod with iron and brass.

Nowhere does Jesus indicate that the path will be smoother for those who follow him. In fact he warns that it will be, if anything, rougher. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20).

Can it be? Was there even for the Son of Man a moment of doubt when he envied the beasts of the field? Did the Stygian blackness of despair so envelop him that he too wondered whether perhaps the dogs were better off, who had only to eat, sleep, reproduce and die? If he did, then, as Conrad said, "he is one of us."

Our Lord warned his disciples that if they identified themselves with him they would have to wear a yoke and bear a burden. And yet there would be something within them that would make the yoke easy and the burden light.

A ring, a robe and a pair of shoes—are these the neglected symbols of Christendom? They remind us of love, righteousness and strength, which are, when all is said and done, "the nails and axles of the universe."

THREE LITTLE PIGS

A Sermon for Children by Donald Simms, Jr.

ONCE upon a time there were three little pigs. One day they left home and each of them just knew that he would make a great success of life. You know the story. Let's take a look and see how some folks act like the three little pigs.

The first little pig built his house out of the first material he found—straw. He "built his little nest somewhere out in the west." Then "huff and puff"—you know the rest.

This little pig is like the people who build their lives on the first thing they come across—the material things of this life. We ministers have a great big word for it—"materialism." What we mean is that people are not interested in anything but the automobiles, the fur coats, the TV sets—the gadgets of life. The Bible calls it selling your life for a mess of pottage (Gen. 25:29-34). The Bible says to these people: "Life does not consist of the abundance of the things you possess" (Luke 12:15). Well, the first pig didn't last long, did he? Do you think any of us will if we put our trust in the things we can gather about us?

The second little pig did a bit better than the first one. He didn't fall for the straw—the things of this life; he looked a little farther until he found some sticks. He thought he was secure. Then "huff and puff"—you know the rest.

This little pig is like the people who build their lives on false gods. They don't grab for the things about them, but they worship the wrong things. There are many false gods to worship. One false god we can worship is the state. Some people used to say of America, "My country right or wrong, but my country!" That is one of the "sticks" of life. Adolph Hitler was a person who worshiped the false god of the state. But the Bible says: "You shall have no other gods before me." Building our life on anything but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a good way to build our house of straw or sticks. When we do it's "huff and puff"—you know the rest.

Each time we read the story of the three little pigs we say to ourselves: "I'm going to be like the third little pig. I'll build my house out of bricks, and then the wolf won't get me." That's right, that is what we ought to do. Now the bricks that build "a house . . . eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1) are faith, hope and love. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Ps. 127:1). Neither the wolf of time nor the wolf of evil will ever blow down the house built on God.

DONALD SIMS, JR., is minister of the Community Methodist Church of Fort Hancock, Tex.

God's Telescope

The greatest intellect of all Christian time has declared that the highest wisdom for you and me and everybody alive consists of "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." If that sounds narrowing, it is no more so than to ask an astronomer to fit his eye to the narrow eyepiece of a telescope. Through its lens, he can search the depths of the heavens and bring many invisible suns into clear view. So, looking into and through Christ, I am given strength and sight to see God's will and God's eternity.—*Franklin Clark Fry, President, United Lutheran Church in America.*

Pulpit Post

Let the Editors Speak

SIR: It has taken me well over a year to find any fault with the new Pulpit. I like it immensely—and it's good for my humility.

But today, as I began to make a textual index for Volume 22 (my 18th), I discovered that you are no longer numbering pages consecutively through the year, but beginning again in each month's issue. Here's one vote for a return to the former system.

WILLIAM T. TURNBULL.
Brooklyn United Presbyterian,
Cleveland, Ohio.

[How do other readers feel about Dr. Turnbull's suggestion? When we revised The Pulpit a spot check indicated preachers preferred the method now being used. Here's another place for the *real* editors to speak up!—THE EDITORS.]

A Loose-Leaf Hymnal?

SIR: The open letter by Ernest K. Emurian on a common hymnal leads me to offer a suggestion of a very different kind. There is grave doubt about the advisability, not to say the practicability, of aiming at a standardized hymnbook for all Protestants. Religious traditions, temperaments and creeds would work strongly against anything like the universal acceptance of such a hymnal.

I have long felt the need, however, of a type of hymnal that could be made to order for each local church. The proposal is that hymnbook publishers devise a loose-leaf hymnal that will enable a church or group of churches to select the hymns they wish to sing. New hymns could be added as the congregation widened its hymnological interests. The hymns could be published with a selection of tunes so that the church could make its own choice of tune. Ministers frequently find themselves frustrated in the use of excellent hymns because the musical authorities have wedded the hymn they wish to use to a tune totally unfamiliar to the congregation.

Perhaps the National Council of Churches might be willing to work on such a plan in conjunction with their consideration of the standardized hymnal suggested by your correspondent. Or some publisher might be ready to launch out on an enterprise of this kind.

Plantation Community, PERCY V. DAWE.
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Hymns for Today

SIR: In behalf of the worshipers I led on Palm Sunday, many thanks to Hoover Rupert for his new hymn (April).

It seems that we still need some new "special day" hymns—we have no good hymn for Mother's Day, for example. Dr. Tittle felt that "the church of today is particularly lacking in hymns of the Kingdom of God," and I would like to use a congregational hymn at a church wedding. I cite these suggestions for the workbench of some consecrated, ambitious and theologically grounded verse-writer.

First Methodist, AL B. ELIASON.
Oconto, Wis.

[The Pulpit welcomes such hymns.—THE EDITORS.]

Justice for All

SIR: I am surprised that you would print an article like Harry Milton Taylor's (April) and call it a Christian sermon. Such an address must have made the rich congregation of Calvary Methodist Church in East Orange, N. J., feel more secure and smug than ever. I have known that church for years and a poor man would not dare enter unless he were the janitor.

I would like to ask when socialism is not socialism—although I think Mr. Taylor mixes his metaphors. I will answer by saying that it is not socialism when it is an executive of one of the big companies getting from $25,000 to $300,000 a year plus bonuses and pensions. As many hearings at public utility commissions have brought out, all too often these executives are functionaries without a function, adding to the high cost of living, making necessary some type of social security for the rest of us. However, when a person not able to save a pension for himself gets one from a government contributory plan of whatever name, it is socialism to Mr. Taylor. I do not believe that any intelligent Christian favors sharing the wealth in the sense of his article, but "justice for all" is certainly within the scope of our Christian teaching.

Wayne Community, WARREN E. MESLER.
Wayne, Me.

'Successful' Ministers

SIR: I note in "For the Record" (April) Mr. Motter's reference to K. S. Jones' report on the Yale Divinity School survey of 300 successful ministers. Will someone tell us what a "successful" minister is?

Sturgeon Bay, Wis. EMERSON W. HARRIS.

A Pastor Reports

SIR: Just "for the record" (April) I am passing on to you the reading habits of a clergyman who has been out of seminary for five years. Yours truly read 38 books in 1951. Just to prove that I did something besides reading books, I am also enclosing my last year's annual report to my churches. This shows that I gave 113 sermons and addresses, made 276 calls, performed 19 baptisms, received 18 new members, had 2 funerals and 1 wedding, gave 18 radio devotionals, and attended 20 denominational and interdenominational meetings, conferences and workshops. A minister can find time to read and I find it very rewarding.

Christ Congregational, C. SHANNON MORGAN.
Clintonville, Wis.

Religion and Health

SIR: Your strong emphasis on "mental health" (May) should help direct the church's ministry to the whole spirit of man. Many of us have been influenced by a theological education which paralleled secular education in the belief that the mind through conceptual knowledge and systematic speculation holds the key to salvation. We anticipate a better ministry as we learn to deal with all that is in man—the "secrets of the heart," the "gall of bitterness," the "straitened bowels," as well as the "veil over the mind." Thank you for your contribution to this ministry.

Presbyterian Church, FRANCIS K. STEEVES.
Wassaic, N. Y.

SIR: The May Pulpit with its sermons on mental and physical illness and healing is tops. It brings into focus a much needed emphasis in the church today. Congratulations on another superb issue of the minister's indispensable journal.

First E. U. B., C. WILLARD FETTER.
Akron, Ohio.

'Nobody Would Steal a Pulpit'

SIR: Because of the insurrection in Burma my mail in 1949-50 was parked in the Rangoon P.O. and in October 1950 I received piles of mail from November 1948 on. *Reader's Digests* and *National Geographics* had been stolen but of course nobody would steal a Pulpit so I had a pile of Pulpits to read. I read them carefully, mark parts with a red pencil for the teachers and each teacher initials each copy after reading.

The ECA has spent millions in Burma. But it has not

made friends as it might have because too many of the Americans have wanted to lead and the Burmans want to run their own country, now that they are free. Communist propaganda adds fuel to their suspicion of the U. S. A.'s wanting to dominate. More of Paul's feeling of being a debtor to the "have-nots" would benefit the U. S. A. with a greater friendliness on the part of the Burmans.

A.B.S. Chin Mission, E. CARROLL CONDICT.
Thayetmyo, Burma.

From China . . .

SIR: During my long service in Foochow, China, 1901-50, I have been deeply indebted to The Pulpit. It is indispensable wherever one works and lives! You have been our friend and helper. God bless you for years to come.

Missionary Home, EDWARD H. SMITH.
Auburndale, Mass.

. . . And South America

SIR: I have just read Dr. Scotsford's "The Ministry Looks Up." Do Christ and the prophets recognize their successors and rejoice that at long last they are adequately paid, and everybody speaks well of them—no more stoning, no cross to bear? Rather, I think I hear them weep.

Friendship House, EARL M. SMITH.
Montevideo, Uruguay.

June Bouquets

SIR: The Pulpit grows more vigorous as it grows with the years.

Gilbertville, Mass. R. J. HODGEN.

SIR: Your magazine has been carrying some good sermons. In particular, the one by Albert E. Barnett (March) "Religion and the Needs of Men," reflected the true prophetic spirit.

Bradley Avenue E. U. B., GEORGE E. JACOBS.
Peoria, Ill.

SIR: We are constant readers and lovers of your ministerial magazine. The sermons printed therein have helped us know the thinking of fellow ministers and the other materials have been very helpful.

ELIEZER D. MAPANAO.
North-Central Luzon Conference,
United Church of Christ in the Philippines,
San Fernando, P. I.

Mouthwash

SIR: Karl H. A. Rest's "Can a Preacher Also Be Saved?" (March) should be required reading for every seminarian and minister and should be reissued every seven years. He suggests a new epithet—"ecclesiastical halitosis"—because his article is a real mouthwash for us offenders.

Congregational Church, RICHARD HULBERT.
Faribault, Minn.

Thank You, Mr. Trimble

SIR: The March Pulpit is of unusual quality. Either Whitney M. Trousdale's "Four Roads to a Vital Faith" or Hillyer H. Straton's "The Problem of my Guilt" or Karl H. A. Rest's "Can a Preacher Also Be Saved?" would be sufficient by itself for one issue. Trousdale's linking of the four roads, his introduction and conclusion are worth close study. His development "ties a knot" in the reader's mind. But the editor or proofreader should have caught the boner in the last paragraph of Straton's sermon, "Long ago Paul wrote, "If we say that we have no sin . . ." The passage is I *John* 1:8. JAMES C. TRIMBLE.

Falcon Heights Congregational,
St. Paul, Minn.

The Hebrew-Christian View

SIR: Hillyer Straton's sermon "The Problem of My Guilt" (March) refers to the Hebrew-Christian view: "Out of penitence comes forgiveness. Since no mention is made of Jesus in this sermon, the reader is left wondering what contribution, if any, Christianity has made to the traditional Hebrew view concerning the need for human redemption.

In this well written sermon, interestingly put together, more questions are raised for me than are answered. After all, is there anything distinctive about Christ and Christianity, or can we all become followers of traditional Judaism, and thus be assured of entering the Kingdom of God?

Islip Methodist, LESTER E. LODER.
Islip, N. Y.

SIR: Let me commend you most heartily for including in your March issue a sermon by Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, of Houston, Tex. Thank you for your policy of including sermons by able rabbis in your excellent publication.

Bethany Congregational, WILLIAM I. NEWMAN.
Los Angeles, Calif.

Enslin—'Life-Giving Zephyr'

TO MORTON S. ENSLIN:

SIR: You are a fine scholar, a writer of top-drawer quality and a critic in the real sense of the word, but an unrepentant, unregenerate liberal—and I love you for it. In these days of militant fundamentalism and crisis-"grasshopper" neo-orthodoxy, you come as a salt-laden, life-giving zephyr in a smoky, uncertain era of emotionally upset and frustrated humanity, some members of which are making an anachronism of theology.

Your "Acts of God" (April) left me not only chortling with glee but comforted by the knowledge that there are still men like you on the religious scene. You have great courage and give evidence that there is still some hope for modern preachers and theologians. If I've catalogued you on the wrong page, please let me know.

First Christian, CHARLES W. BARE.
Midway, Ky.

ENSLIN REPLIES

SIR: A letter like this makes any day bright. All I can say as to the facts involved is, I hope that you are right in your diagnosis. It is the prceise page I would like to occupy, both in your catalogue and in your heart.

MORTON S. ENSLIN.

Enslin—Con and Pro

SIR: Is it not time you retired your M. S. Enslin and found someone fitted to tell us something about the strong points in American preachers? At the moment my total impression is that your preachers are dull, word bound, stupid, near-illiterate, have very funny faces and generally lack charm and grace. I can imagine your professional "snoop"—or is he an inspector of moral nuisances?—going first to one church and then another, not to gather the fruit but to spy out the land. Certainly M.S.E. has made a case against various forms of introduction to the prayers, but has he not experienced a giggle in the choir at the point where the minister said, "Let us pray"? Poor things, they heard "Let us spray."

Emsdale-Kearney Charge, ARTHUR PACKMAN.
United Church of Canada,
Kearney, Ont.

SIR: Enslin's "Concerning Acts of God" (April) might well be another Emancipation Proclamation for many minds. Any of us who have felt like going outside to brush dust from our minds and souls after listening to funeral stress on "God's will" or platitudes from individuals on "God knew best" can turn with delight to the Enslin whisk-broom. More power to him in the needling that all too many of us need who shrink from that terrible ordeal of doing some honest Christian thinking!

Westminster Presbyterian, IRA L. LIVINGSTON.
Jamestown, N. Y.

By Granger E. Westberg

A helpful proposal for strengthening the local church's ministry of worship and study

Is Your Sunday School Hurting Your Church?

GEORGE, a ten-year-old Sunday school boy, was passing his church one afternoon when his new pastor called to him inviting him into the church. While they were talking, the boy notice the door near the minister's desk and asked, "Pastor, where does that door lead to?"

"Into the sanctuary, George."

"What's in there?"

"That is where the congregation worships on Sundays. You've certainly been there, haven't you, George?"

"No, sir, I just go to the Sunday school in the basement."

"How long have you been going to Sunday school?"

"Three years."

"And you've never been to a worship service?"

"No, sir. They always say to 'stay for church if you can,' but hardly anybody ever does."

This is the gist of a conversation I had some ten years ago. About the same time I had another experience which made me feel concerned about the Sunday school. I was spending a few days going from door to door as a church survey worker. Coming to a neat little house in a suburban community, I asked the friendly housewife if she had a church affiliation. She did not go to any church now, she replied, but when she was a girl she went to First Church Sunday school four blocks over. I asked her how long it was since she had gone to that church. I was somewhat startled by her reply.

"Oh, I never did go to the church," she said. "I just went to the Sunday school. I've got a pin to show I had perfect attendance for five years. But when I got to be about fourteen, the gang I went with broke up, so I stopped going."

Ever since these experiences, whenever I have had occasion to conduct services in other churches, I have made it a point to get there an hour before church time so that I could watch the Sunday school in action. I have made mental notes on some fifty churches of several major denominations. Most Sunday schools I have observed seem to be complete units in themselves, working almost as competitors of the church. In their present form they do not help young Christians to grow naturally into the worship life of the adult congregation.

Competitor?

We know that the Protestant church is losing an alarming number of young people between the ages of 13 and 18, and it looks as if it is partly the fault of the Sunday school. Does that sound like heresy? Perhaps we should stop to re-evaluate the Sunday school and see if it has become more important than the church itself in the minds of Protestant youngsters. Perhaps we should make some changes so that it does not compete with the church it was designed to feed.

Here is a composite picture of what I have seen in so many of the churches I have visited: It is 9:30 a.m. Sunday morning and children are streaming into First Church basement. This is the intermediate department and there is a good deal of noise as the children assemble. Five minutes are lost before the superintendent can announce the opening hymn. Then follows an opening exercise, which is little more than an *exercise*, led by a well meaning but poorly trained and poorly prepared leader. Scripture is read in a perfunctory manner and the children seem totally unaware of its meaning. Then follow the announcements.

A few minutes before ten, the children "go to their classes." This consists of turning the chairs around in a circle and going into a sort of huddle. Because of crowded conditions, some classes are held in the kitchen and the boiler room. Half of the teachers seem unusually young. The superintendent explains that they are having difficulty getting enough teachers, so he has had to press these young people into service. One of the classes of boys is without a teacher. Bedlam prevails in that corner of the room until it is decided that they will have to go in with a younger class for the remainder of the period. The boys protest, since their "gang" spirit has been disturbed, and the teacher is hard put to keep them in line.

Bedlam Prevails

We sit in on the class of one of the more experienced teachers and find that she has her lesson well prepared and presents it effectively. But with our other ear we can listen in on the class of girls three feet away. Their teacher is about sixteen. She is telling the girls about the party she went to the night before. She describes it in some detail and the pupils hang on every word. Suddenly she remembers the lesson. They take out their lesson books but it is clear that she is not at all prepared—in fact there is quite a bit of discussion as to which is the right lesson. When the bell rings to end the class period I am left wondering what these girls could possibly have learned.

With the singing of the final hymn and benediction, the boys who have been inching toward the door make a final dash to be the first ones out. They have not even heard the announcement that they should "stay for church *if* you can." Staying for church is the farthest thing from their minds. They are heading for home and the Sunday funnies.

At 10:45 an entirely different group arrives at this church. These are the adults. They do not go down into the basement, but up into the lovely church proper where in an atmosphere charged with reverent beauty they assemble for worship.

Give the Children a Chance

In other words, in this typical church there are two separate and distinct groups—one made up of children and teachers who spend their time in the basement, and the other composed of adults who have the use of the sanctuary. They have little if anything to do with each other. Often the leaders of each group administer their affairs as if they were in direct competition. Success is measured in terms of who had the greatest numbers.

(Continued on page 25)

GRANGER E. WESTBERG has been chaplain of the Augustana Lutheran hospital, Chicago, since 1945. He received his theological training at Augustana Seminary, Rock Island, Ill., and completed a five-year pastorate at Bloomington in the same state before coming to his present position. A recognized leader in the hospital chaplaincy field, he administers a clinical training program for seminary students and pastors, directs a monthly premarital conference, and serves as teacher and counselor to over 300 nurses in the hospital's school of nursing. He is a former president of the Association of Protestant Chaplains.

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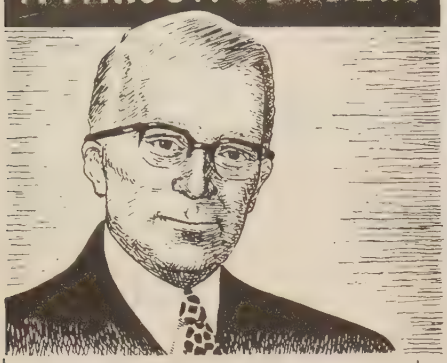

Human nature provides a fascinating field of study, and the question of why people behave as they do never ceases to be interesting. Like a famous actress, the genus homo is always unpredictable.

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'And He Stood Up to Read'

FROM time to time, instead of grappling with some weighty question of theology or attempting in 750 words to solve some problem which has hitherto baffled and vexed both sinners and saints, I have used this column to point out matters which, although perhaps trivial in themselves, appear to me important to the preacher because they so often annoy and distract—and needlessly so—many a man in the pew.

A question raised in a recent letter from a correspondent in Burma, who apparently shares my feeling (and that of the Hebrew poet) that it is not infrequently the little foxes which spoil the vines, prompts me to give utterance to one more of these "I wish the preacher wouldn't's." The question was: "Why do so many preachers look up or at the congregation from time to time while reading the scripture?" Frankly, Dr. Condict, I don't know. The habit—and it is a widespread one in America as well as Burma—annoys me as much as it does you; in fact I have long had this particular query on my list of possible patter.

That the preacher should face and look at his congregation while preaching is natural and altogether proper. But when he is reading the Bible, the situation appears to me very different. During that time his attention should properly be centered there, and there alone. And, it may be interjected, it should not be an unrehearsed reading, quite regardless of how well in theory he knows the passage. The apparent lack of specific preparation for this particular part of the service is nothing short of scandalous. There are commentaries, but one wouldn't think so as one hears the average preacher stumble through the lesson.

Then when he reads, let him read with understanding and appreciation as he seeks to enter into the thought and to make it alive for his people. Let him keep his eyes on the text instead of indulging in the schoolboyish trick of raising his glance mechanically and jack-in-the-boxwise every twenty-three seconds to look at nothing in particular, with that vacuous unseeing stare which is so regularly a part of the act.

If for no other reason, common sense alone should warn of the danger that under the strain of public reading the eye can come back to the wrong word, with an unfortunate break in the reading and the utterly unpardonable need of a stumbling correction. But not only that; I am convinced, as is my Pulpit friend in Burma, that such looking up from the Bible while reading definitely hinders and detracts from the congregation's appreciation of what should be and can be, and frequently isn't, a very hight spot in the service. The preacher's own bearing while reading and his genuine concern for what he is reading can never be masked if really present or faked if really absent. This will surely give the reading its own weight and dignity as no mechanical coda, "May God add his blessing to this reading of his holy and sacred word," uttered like an incantation at its conclusion can ever hope to do.

And while on this matter of reading the Bible, may I be permitted to raise one more outraged query: Why, why in heaven's name, is it necessary to read from a pocket or underarm Bible? I can conceive that in a special service held in a room not normally used or equipped for the purpose such a procedure may be necessary. But in a formal auditorium (yes, I still prefer that honest word to "sanctuary") where there is a pulpit Bible open before him, it is certainly ridiculous—to be charitable and use no stronger word—to see the preacher make ostentatious use of some other text. If he doesn't like the version on the pulpit, let him ask his church to get him one he can use. If for some special reason he wants to read the particular passage from some other translation, let him put said version in conspicuously on the pulpit Bible, before the service. And finally, if the print in either or both is so small that he cannot read it in a book resting on the lectern, let him either get his sexton to raise said lectern, or go to his oculist and procure stronger glasses.

And one finally final caveat: whatever version he chances to use, let it remain anonymous. Of all the puerile nonsense I have ever heard, none surpasses the volunteered information: "This morning I am reading from Dr. Moffatt's, or from Professor Goodspeed's, or from the Revised Standard Version." Let him use them, of course, as much as he pleases—they are all fine—but let him omit the commercial.

Sermon Summary

When Spring Comes to the Heart

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away. Behold, the new has come.—II Cor. 5:17.

ONCE more the miracle of spring is taking place before our eyes. The old is passing away. A new season is about to be born. All nature is preparing to say, "The new has come." This is a parable of life. The miracle of change is possible for everyone. Spring comes to the heart when Christ enters. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."

When spring comes the birds return. We miss their song throughout the winter. When they come back they remind us that our winters of fear, defeat, sorrow and sin need not last. Christ can enter the life and put a song in the heart. He is God's maker of song. He gives us a new staff on which we can write new notes of praise. He tells us what key to use. He takes our discordant experiences and puts them together into an anthem of victory.

When spring comes it puts color into the world around us. Our lawns are carpeted in green, our gardens take on floral designs and our houses are redecorated. The drabness of winter is soon forgotten as everything takes on a new beauty. In a similar way the coming of Christ to a life means beauty. He adds the pigment that makes life full of amazing hues. We are no longer frustrated. We have a reason for living. Life is not empty.

When spring comes, growth returns. Winter is the time of the long sleep. Nature seems at a standstill. But spring buds and tiny shoots tell us that the growing season has set in. So many lives are dormant. Their potential is never achieved. The person who ought to be never develops. But Christ changes all that. His spirit takes the sand of Peter's nature and transforms it into a rock. Mary of the streets becomes a virtuous woman. When Christ comes "it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

As a method of sales promotion a department store places artistic pictures of flowers and birds about its aisles and suspends this question above its counters: "Is there spring in your heart?" This is a good question for all of us. Spring comes to the heart when it has the song of triumph, when it is touched by the beauty of a high purpose, when it is growing into Christ-like maturity.—*Murray A. Figg, Kenmore Methodist, Akron, Ohio.*

Prayer of the Church

Beaufort, C. M. D.

O Christ, great Lover of ours souls,
  Meek Lord of sympathy,
Our lips, how eloquent they are,
  Our hearts, how far from thee!
We worship our dividing walls,
  We boast our caste and clan;
Oh, let thy Kingdom quickly come,
  A brotherhood of man.

We hail thy name with words of praise
  And boast our loyalty,
But in our heart and lives, O Lord,
  How far we are from thee!
Awake our souls to diligence
  In heeding now thy call,
And guide our steps toward service true,
  Thou Master of us all.

If any vain ambitions lurk
  To thwart thy larger will,
Let them in love be crucified
  As we thy wish fulfill.
Renew in us swift sympathy,
  Destroy all selfish creeds,
That we may pray "Thy Kingdom come"
  In eloquence of deeds.

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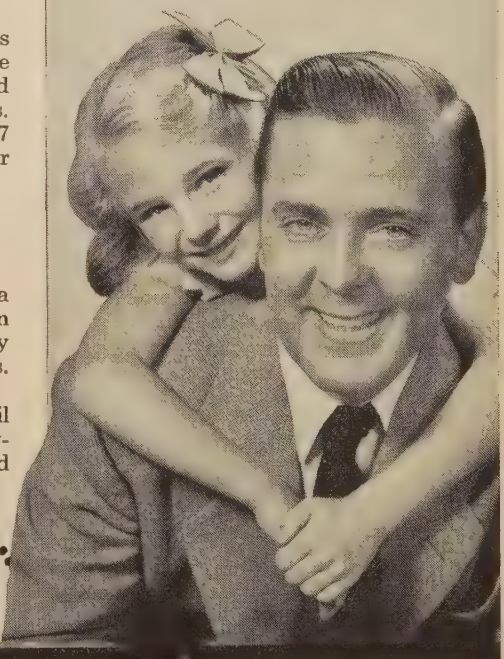

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Roger J. Squire

• *How Much Are We Worth?*

IN the middle of November 1951, an authority on Italian paintings of the 16th century authenticated an old canvas which Mrs. Isabelle Giroux of Sea Cliff, Long Island, had purchased at a rummage sale. Some appraisers say the painting, by the famous master Luca Longhi, is worth $25,000. Mrs. Giroux had paid $3 for it. She was attracted to it by the dimly seen brilliance of the subject, "Madonna and Child and Two Saints."

God is constantly doing that for us. Underneath our somewhat shoddy appearance he sees possibilities. We who are so often discouraged when our ideals become tarnished, and who are in constant danger of throwing away those virtues which are of good report, need the experience of a Paul: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

• *How Readest Thou?*

THE admonition to "attend to your Scripture reading" was not taken seriously by Rafael Rios, a novice pickpocket a few summers ago in New York city. Detectives finally caught up with Rios, who had managed to sit next to a sleeping passenger on a Third avenue elevated train. Rios was a great believer in not letting his left hand know what his right hand was doing. When he was arrested, he had an open Bible in his left hand, and in his right hand he had a 15-inch length of lead pipe wrapped in a newspaper. The Bible-reading Rios had just tapped his victim on the head with the concealed pipe.

Bible reading which does not influence our attitudes and actions is worse than a complete neglect of the Book.

• *The Christian's Spirit of Persistence*

WE just have to get over the idea that the young folk have to carry the whole load. In the struggle to which God has called us there is a job for everyone. Let no one say, for example, that he is too old. It has been psychologically demonstrated that you can teach a dog new tricks in spite of his age. In fact most of us never use half of our brain cells anyway.

Take Eleanor Wilson, whom the Congregational Church asked in 1950 to visit 28 church centers spread over some 3,000 miles. The mission board provided a 63-foot, 29-ton, two-masted schooner. The trouble was that Miss Wilson was 58 years old and knew nothing about sailing. But she got some books and with the help of a navy airplane navigator she learned to plot a course. So off she went with seven natives on the 3,000-mile cruise among the tricky coral reefs, and completed her trip without mishap.

Such is the stuff out of which Christians are made. She gave the credit for having steered clear of coral heads to the natives. The real reason was that she sailed in the spirit of One who taught her persistence in fulfilling a magnificent venture of faith. When you set out to do something for Jesus you do not sail alone. Even in the last great venture of life you can say as your ship sails beyond the horizon, "I hope to see my Pilot face to face."

ROGER J. SQUIRE is the minister of First Methodist Church, Red Bank, N. J.

Pulpit Calendar

June 1—Whitsunday (Pentecost). Christian Unity Sunday.
June 8—Trinity Sunday. Sovereign's Birthday (United Kingdom, Canada, Australia).
June 14—Flag Day (USA).
June 15—Second Sunday after Pentecost. Children's Sunday.
June 22—Third Sunday after Pentecost.
June 29—Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles. Nature Sunday. Independence Sunday.
July 1—Dominion Day (Canada).
July 2—The Visitation.
July 4—Independence Day (U.S.A.).
July 6—Fifth Sunday after Pentecost.
July 13—Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.
July 20—Seventh Sunday after Pentecost.
July 27—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 3—Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 10—Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 17—Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 24—Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 31—Festival of Christ the King. Labor Sunday.
Sept. 1—Labor Day.
SEASONS: Whitsuntide and Kingdomtide.
ALTAR COLORS: Whitsuntide, red and white; Pentecost, red; June 8 and 15, white; 22, green; 29, green or red; July and August, green.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of nationwide or denominational significance.)

• *The Builders and Destroyers*

DURING the 1951 hunting season in New York state an incident took place which illustrates the chasm between those who care and those who are thoughtlessly brutal. Outside of Rochester, Lambie, a pet Japanese doe, was felled but not killed by a hunter who fired into a private kennel. The veterinarian gave Lambie penicillin, tetanus shots and a blood transfusion. Neighborhood youngsters loved the deer and one of them slept next to her those first few nights to keep her warm and calm. Our world is filled with godless people like that hunter, who, with cruel actions, are trying to kill the hopes of tomorrow's children. The Christian faith assures us that the future belongs to the neighborhood youngsters all over the world to whom "caring" and "kindness" and "love" are the great words of a universal language.

• *A Good Time to Be Alive*

EDGAR Ansel Mowrer has been covering the European scene for Americans since World War I. His penetrating analysis of foreign events won him a Pulitzer prize for journalism. He is a man fully aware of the military, political and social situation of our present era. Yet Mr. Mowrer insists that "this is a good time to be alive." His optimism is based on a recognized law of life which says that an accepted challenge can result in good in the long run. His opinion is that later generations may, strangely enough, conclude that in challenging the West, Soviet communism actually made it possible for the coming world-wide civilization to be born into freedom and not into slavery.

• *A God-Haunted Book*

MANY of us were brought up on the enthusiastic appreciation which William Lyons Phelps, Yale professor of English literature, had for the literary majesty of the Bible in a day when many in his field were neglecting the Book. A student by the name of Chad Walsh was moving from atheism to faith about that time. Mr. Walsh, now a Beloit College English professor, is carrying on a literary appreciation for the biblical selection of tales. "Basically, though," he writes in reviewing some new books about the Bible for the *New York Times*, "the appeal of the Bible is that it has provided millions of men and women with satisfying answers to the questions that every human being must grapple with. The Bible is able to do this because its central character is God. Giants like Moses and Paul are important not so much in their own right as because of their relationship with God. The Bible is a God-haunted book, and as such it has always been able to speak to the most extreme variety of readers, from an Augustine or Aquinas to men and women who laboriously spell out the words, letter by letter."

(Continued from page 20)

Though the children are supposed to be in training to become a part of this adult congregation, 60 to 75 per cent of them never get there. We think one of the reasons is that they are not given a chance to feel at home in the church while they are growing up.

The Christian church has long held, and now modern psychology and psychiatry are scientifically verifying, that the three most important periods of a person's life are from age 0 to 6, from age 6 to 12, and finally from age 12 to 18, in that order.

Our Future Churchmen

If the Sunday school accepts the responsibility to prepare children to be churchmen it would seem wise to introduce these future churchmen to the church itself during the earliest period. Some churches are bringing their tots of three to six years of age up into the church proper every Sunday of the year for a special ten-minute worship service in clear view of the altar. Often the pastor leads this little service. Following this the children go to their classrooms for the usual instruction and play period. These churches feel that these children are not too young to be influenced by the beauty of this unusual building. The stained-glass windows, the high vaulted ceilings, the sound of the organ, all combine to make an indelible impression on the little child's soul. This is like no other place in the community to which he goes. This is God's house. But the child must have a chance to feel at home here. He must have the privilege of going to this unique worship room oftener than only on special occasions. To grow up feeling at home here he must worship here 52 Sundays a year.

What shall we do with the child who is seven or eight? Now he is in the second most important period of his life. Should we break the pattern of weekly entrance into this holy place? Obviously not! Now he can remain more than ten minutes — perhaps thirty minutes, perhaps even longer. For the age group from seven to twelve or fourteen, each church will have to work out its own plan. Whatever the plan, it is absolutely essential that every child in that Sunday school be given an opportunity to spend time worshiping God in the part of the building particularly designed for worship. The basement or the parish house is designed for study or social activities, not for worship, and we cannot possibly expect this child ever to come to love the worship sanctuary unless he spends a great deal of time there. And that again means 52 Sundays a year.

It is with this age group that many

(Continued on page 27)

For many needs and interests . . .

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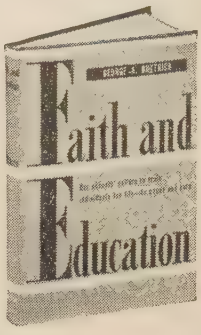
GEORGE A. BUTTRICK



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Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Quarterly Review of Sacred Music

THREE series deserve attention this month. The "Williams College Series" (Schirmer, Boston) consists of excellent part-songs for men's voices, selected and arranged by Robert Barrow. A typical example is No. 2143, "Lord Jesus, Thy Dear Angel Send," by Bach (TTBB, two tenor and two bass parts), 16 cents. There are similar arrangements of such universal choral favorites as "Now Thank We All Our God," No. 2115, 15 cents, and "The Holly and the Ivy," No. 2117, 15 cents.

The "Westminster Choir College Library", (Theodore Presser Co., Bryn Mawr, Pa.) prepared under the guidance of the school's founder-president, John Finley Williamson, includes a four-part mixed voice anthem based on Neumark's famous hymn, "If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee" arranged by R. O. Thompson, 18 cents; and a brilliant and colorful arrangement by Martin (which out-Warings the great Fred himself) of Robert Lowry's simple and beautiful gospel song, "Shall We Gather at the River." Entitled "Beautiful River" and priced at 22 cents, it is guaranteed to challenge the best in any choir, and delight discriminating congregations. Though it is sometimes reminiscent of the cataracts of the Niagara, enough of the placidity associated with the River of Life is present to remind the listener of the author-composer's original intent: to comfort the sorrowing rather than resurrect the dead. Similar symphonic choral arrangements of familiar gospel songs could well become a lucrative major project for some music publishing house during the next decade.

Fortune Music Co., 701 Seventh Ave., New York, has published a series of novelty songs based on new twists to familiar Bible stories or new arrangements of old spirituals. Among these are "Noah and the Ark," by Cole (four-part male voices, 20 cents); and "Jonah and the Whale" (the whale's side of the story) by this reviewer, arranged by George Shackley and Richard Maxwell for four-part male as well as four-part mixed voices, 20 cents.

From the H. W. Gray Co., New York, come a number of releases worthy of mention. One is a hauntingly beautiful, refreshingly simple anthem for Mother's Day or general use, entitled "Carol of the Mother" (When Jesus was a little thing, His mother in her hood of blue . . ."), poem by Lizette Reese, music by Austin Lovelace; for four-part mixed voices, No. 2160, 18 cents. Then there are four better than average anthems: "Blow, Golden Trumpets," by Walter Wild, an Easter or general anthem for four-part male voices, No. 2166, 18 cents; "God is Gone Up," for Ascension or general use, by Titcomb, for four-part mixed voices, No. 2192, 20 cents; "Fight the Good Fight," for mixed voices, by Goldsworthy, No. 2224, 18 cents; and "By the Waters of Bablyon," for male voices, by Philip James, No. 2167, 20 cents. While sweetness and light have their place in the choir loft, singers would do well to tackle a tough number that demands plenty of diaphragm and keeps them on their toes physically as well as musically. Any of the four will fill the bill!

Gray has also published the prize anthem of the American Guild of Organists for 1951. It is a chorus for mixed voices, Psalm 150, by Maud Sewall, No. 2203, 18 cents. While an interesting modern adaption of the Gregorian chant, and undoubtedly chorally and harmonically correct, it ends up more a study than a song, and more an exercise than an anthem for general use. Striving for a home-run, it gets a base on balls.

M. Whitmark & Sons, New York, publish a fine three-part (soprano, alto, baritone) anthem arrangement of Caro Roma's famous sacred solo, "I Come to Thee," No. 4-W3436, 16 cents, and easily within the reach of the average choir, but not beneath an artistic interpretation by the above average. Another Roma release is a two-part women's voice anthem, "God shall Wipe Away All Tears," No. 1-W3433, also 16 cents.

File this for next spring: A clever and different Easter anthem has been published by J. Fischer & Bro., New York, entitled "Christ Is Risen," by Marion Ohlson, No. 8609, 18 cents. It can be sung by a four-part mixed choir, with soprano solo or with the solo taken by the junior choir. With plenty of rythmic "Alleluias," it has the kind of trickiness which delights the choir (as "Carol of the Bells" always does at Christmas), as well as that unusual quality which is bound to endear it to most congregations.

Sunday School - - -

(Continued from page 25)

churches are seriously concerned. Here is a plan which I have seen work unusually well in several churches.

Study and Worship

The Sunday school no longer begins at 9:30. Instead the entire congregation, which includes all the adults and children, comes into the church for the chief worship service at 10:00 a.m. The service is always rather festive because choirs composed of children, teen-agers and adults are in the procession each Sunday. Enough pageantry is included in the service to keep the children's attention. The sermon is about twenty minutes in length. Although it is not specifically a children's sermon, at least five minutes of it can be understood by them. The service concludes promptly at 11:00 a.m. As the choirs leave in the recessional, the children quietly slip out of their places to go to the basement or parish hall, where their class sessions immediately begin. No time is wasted. Both attendance and offering have been taken care of upstairs. The classes are in session for about thirty minutes, which is equivalent to the study period under the former arrangement. At 11:35 the classes end. Sometimes the children are called together for a few special announcements and then are dismissed with a prayer.

The adult class, which formerly had an attendance of a dozen, has now grown to fifty or more. These people have to wait a half-hour for their children anyway, so they might just as well attend the adult class.

Obviously the plan which I have briefly described will have to be altered to fit the needs of the particular church in question. Whatever modifications are made in the time schedule or the order, the following goals must always be kept in mind:

1. Every child from seven years up must have an opportunity to worship in the church *52 Sundays a year.*
2. The worship experience must never be given a subordinate place on the Sunday schedule.
3. The Sunday or church school must never become a substitute for the worship service. It is primarily a period devoted to study and should not try to take over the function of the worship service.

Sequel to "Good Man"

(See March issue)

There was an old church in Dayton
Which called the young parson from Macon.
He paid off the debt;
New goals he did set.
When he left—their hearts were still achin'.

HERMAN M. GROSS.

We must rethink the use of our beautiful sanctuaries. If we inaugurate a program which brings children into the church every Sunday it will be worth all the extra effort and expense.

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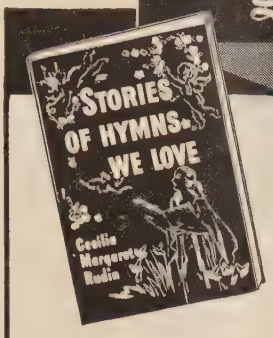

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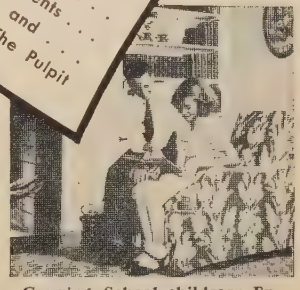

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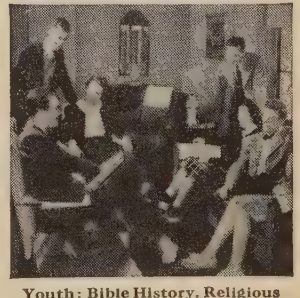

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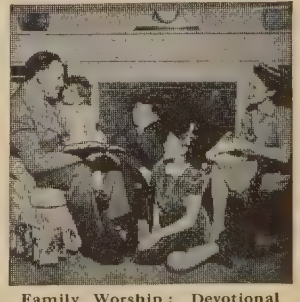

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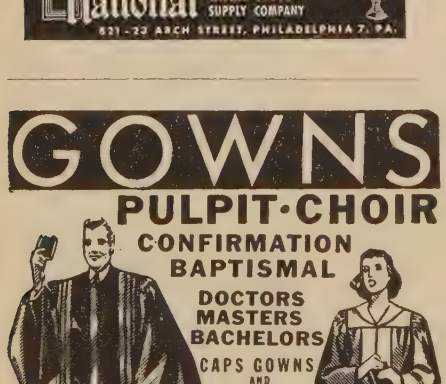

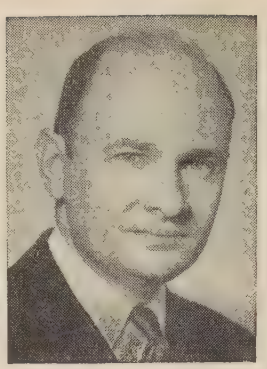

Come Let Us Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

Chancel Arrangement

IN discussing chancel arrangements last month we pointed out that while Protestant churches are seeking to place the altar as far away from the people as possible, there is a tendency in Roman Catholic churches to bring the altar back to the people. At the close of the discussion we asked: As a pastor, what can you do with a church that has an old-fashioned, pulpit-centered chancel when it is not feasible to remodel it into an open chancel?

That type of chancel is familiar to everyone. It usually begins at the end of the apse with an organ chamber fronted by the familiar organ pipes. Directly in front of the organ screen is the choir facing the congregation. Usually the rest of the chancel is on a slightly lower platform, with a reading desk or ambo at front center and the holy table directly below the ambo in the lower chancel. A good many churches with this type of chancel arrangement hope to remodel. Suppose remodeling is not feasible, however, for either architectural or financial reasons. What can be done with this kind of chancel to develop greater worship possibilities?

You do not have to remodel a church to create a chancel that will be pleasing to the eye, meaningful to the mind and easy to use in the service of worship. You may have to spend some money, however, and take a few definite steps toward a simple rearrangement. May I suggest the following:

1. Start with the altar or holy table. Since this is the central symbol of God's presence in the church, our treatment ought to indicate that important fact. Some of these old parlor or end tables or insignificant ecclesiastical tables that we set up as the altar or holy table are completely out of place. Why not have the church buy, or receive as a memorial, an adequate altar or holy table? Such an altar ought to measure 2½x6 feet, or some similar ample measurement. Generally speaking, a paneled front is preferable. Often this paneled front will follow the architectural decorative motif of the rest of the nave. A simple retable or elevation might well run along the back of the altar. Upon the center of this, called the throne, is placed the chancel cross. To either side may be placed the vases for flowers. (The vases are never kept on the retable empty, however.) Upon the top of the table a scarf or covering may be placed, and may hang down a few inches on both ends. Beautiful adornments may be purchased or made by the women of the parish in the liturgical colors. Three of these are basic: purple, white and green. Space ought to be allowed for setting this altar in the lower chancel, even though it means removing the first row of pews in order to push the chancel rail farther forward toward the nave. There should be ample and dignified space for the altar and enough room for the minister to stand before it. This single change will do much toward improving the worship setting of an old-fashioned chancel.

2. Continue this change with the pulpit. How in the world can a minister be satisfied forever to stand behind a reading desk which has a tendency to separate him from his congregation? A reading desk constitutes a speech hurdle for the preacher. Take a ruler and measure the distance which it places between him and the congregation. Then compare the same measurements with a true pulpit. Why not have the church purchase a real pulpit or get someone to give it as a memorial?

3. Take a look at the appointments in the rest of the chancel. On either side of the altar a seven-branched candlestick may be placed. A scarf in the proper liturgical color may be hung over the small desk of the pulpit. Perhaps a window needs some special kind of treatment because it stands out like a sore thumb in the chancel. Other simple steps of this nature may greatly improve the old-fashioned chancel situation.

4. Use proper ceremonial in the chancel even though it is pulpit centered. For the opening acts of adoration, the closing acts of dedication and the presentation of the offering why not stand before the altar, as is proper? Use the pulpit for the reading of the lesson, the pastoral prayer and the sermon. It is hardly necessary to enter the pulpit for the singing of the hymns with the congregation and for making minor announcements. For these parts of the service the minister can stand directly before the chancel chair or stall. If everything associated with the chancel is carried out with good taste, the worship value of even the most disappointing chancel arrangement will be greatly augmented.

Vacation Suggestions

A SURPRISINGLY large number of ministers look upon vacation time as an opportunity for extra reading. Parish responsibilities usually decrease during the summer season and there is a chance to catch up on some of the books which have been pushed aside during the rest of the year. Many ministers and their families will find the books below an interesting part of any vacation reading list.

Recent years have seen the appearance of a number of volumes describing life in the Protestant parsonage. ★★FOR GOODNESS' SAKE, by **Carol Beattie** (Prentice-Hall, $2.95), the latest addition in this field, is a description of the human side of parish life and is altogether delightful and refreshing reading. One becomes aware that most clergymen and their wives have similar experiences but from Mrs. Beattie's pen they unfold as chapters in an ever interesting and fascinating life. There is no false glorification of the profession here but a true and wholesome account of the enriching relationships between pastor and people. These experiences are common to all whether the home of the minister be called rectory, manse or parsonage.

Because the life of a minister's wife has so often been presumed to be a difficult one it is good to read an account which reveals it to be the high adventure it really is. A minister and his wife share experiences which come in few other callings. Most will relive their own experiences through the pages of this book and will agree with its closing sentence: "We wouldn't trade places with anyone, anywhere, because a rectory—any rectory—is a happy place."

SPECIAL

As we go to press the board of judges have just announced their selection of the 1952 Seminarian Preacher of the year. He is William G. Lorenz of McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago. His sermon will appear in our September issue.

AMONG our most popular current biographies is ★"A MAN CALLED PETER" by **Catherine Marshall** (McGraw-Hill, $3.50). This life story of the late Peter Marshall is written by his wife and is a warmly human portrayal of one of America's great religious leaders. Written in an interesting and compelling style, it reveals a man of deep sincerity, dynamic power and enthusiastic leadership. Its record of growth and achievement is not often duplicated. Mrs. Marshall has included six of her husband's sermons as well as a number of his prayers.

THE first book about Elizabeth II since she has become ruler of Britain, "ELIZABETH, THE QUEEN" by **Marion Crawford** (Prentice-Hall, $2.95) reveals the new monarch to be a young woman of dignity, charm and character. Marion Crawford has been the closest person to the new queen outside of the royal family having been responsible for the early education of the two royal princesses.

It is interesting to note that some of Britain's greatest rulers have been queens. None however have come to power with such love and admiration as England's young queen commands. Likewise none have been so intimately known. Her place in the future is expressed in the quotation by a distinguished South African who said, after observing Princess Elizabeth through a Royal Family tour: "If there are still queens when she comes to inherit the throne, I think she will make the greatest one of all."

(MRS. A. M.) L. ELIZABETH MOTTER.

ROUNDUP

★THE BOOK OF LIFE. Arranged and edited by **Newton Marshall Hall** and **Irving Francis Wood.** John Rudin & Co., Chicago; 8 vols., cloth, $39.75; imitation leather, $52.75. This is the silver-anniversary edition of a work which uses some of the best skills of the printing and engraving crafts to make the Bible more inviting and readable for all ages. Over 600 photographs of Bible land scenes and nearly 300 great religious masterpieces are included—with 56 of the latter in beautiful 4-color reproductions. In addition to an exhaustive index, Vol. 8 also contains suggestions on the devotional and educational use of the Bible which will be helpful to most parents and church school teachers as well as to many pastors. In the mind of this reviewer, the use of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, to appear next September 30, will enhance the value of future editions.—*Alton M. Motter, Associate Editor, The Pulpit; Executive Director, Chicago Sunday Evening Club.*

★★INTERPRETING THE NEW TESTAMENT, 1900-1950. By **Archibald M. Hunter.** Westminster, $2.50. The preacher looking for ready-made sermon ideas or an easy source of illustrations can get more for his money elsewhere. But the man who remembers that sound scholarship must underlie sound preaching will find this book unusually rewarding. The author is professor of N.T. at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. He reviews the work done by New Testament scholars in Europe, England and America in the past 50 years.—*C. Willard Fetter, First E.U.B., Akron, Ohio.*

GUIDE TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. By **William A. Spurrier.** Scribners, $2.50. "Beliefs determine action" is the conviction underlying this clear and stimulating layman's book of theology. Helpful also to the preacher, the lucid presentation is an "Exhibit A" in the art of simple, forthright doctrinal preaching. Peterinent illustrations illuminate the profound truths. No volume on theology is complete, however, without a consideration of the doctrine of the church for Christianity by its very nature is social. The two-page bibiliography is excellent.—*Dale S. Bringman, Redeemer Lutheran, Harrisburg, Pa.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

April	May	This Month	An analysis based on reports from leading religious booksellers and from the reading of the Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.
2	3	1	**Questions People Ask.** *Robert J. McCracken. Harper,* $2.50
	9	2	**Go Inquire of the Lord.** *Gerald Kennedy. Harper,* $1.50
6	4	3	**The Interpreter's Bible.** *Vol. VII. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $8.75
1	1	4	**A Man Called Peter.** *Catherine Marshall. McGraw,* $3.50
8	8	5	**By the Way: An Autobiography.** *Francis J. McConnell. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $3.50
	10	6	**The Church Militant.** *Harold A. Bosley. Harper,* $2.00
4	5	7	**The Life We Prize.** *Elton Trueblood. Harper,* $2.50
10	7	8	**Rufus Jones Speaks to Our Times.** *Edited by Harry Emerson Fosdick. Macmillan,* $4.00
		9	**A Protestant Manifesto.** *Wilfred E. Garrison. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $2.75
		10	**Guide to the Christian Faith.** *Wm. A. Spurrier. Chas. Scribner's Sons,* $2.50

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE OUTRAGEOUS DECISION rendered by a trial court in New York forbidding the Congregational denomination to unite with the Evangelical and Reformed Church was reversed on appeal by a 4-to-1 decision. Whether this verdict will be further appealed is not yet known. The essential issue in this case was whether a civil court may tell a church what its religious principles are. This issue turned on the meaning of the autonomy of the local church. In the lower court, Judge Steinbrink held that this autonomy would give the dissenting local churches the right to virtually all the assets and funds held by the corporate agencies of the denomination—missionary, ministerial pensions, etc.—in case the union was consummated. Against this interpretation the proponents of union claimed that the meaning of autonomy as a Congregational principle must be defined by the denomination itself, not by a civil court. Ample evidence was brought forward to prove that the religious principle of denominational solidarity went hand in hand with that of local autonomy. The higher court properly refused to take sides on this religious question. It shifted the issue to the question whether any local church had an interest or right in such properties sufficient to require the court to consider the "ecclesiastical" question. It held that no such right existed in a local church, but only in the donors and beneficiaries of such properties and funds. All Protestant churches with a tradition of local church autonomy will rejoice in this decision.

Steinbrink Judgment Reversed on Appeal

The Book of the Month

FAITH AND EDUCATION, *by George A. Buttrick. Abingdon-Cokesbury, $2.00.*

THIS BOOK is a withering exposure of the fallacies and failures of modern education. It brought to mind former Chancellor Hutchins' declaration that "modern education is not bad—it's terrible!" The difference between the two men is that Hutchins would cure the illusions of science by bringing back metaphysics and the humanities into the curriculum, while Buttrick would bring back faith—and he means Christian faith—into the whole educational process. His attack on modern education is directed at "scientism" and its claim of "objectivity" and finality. He sees the "self-deception" involved in its disavowal of, or unwillingness to examine, the presuppositions of scientific method. His interpretation of the Christian faith is a rare combination of profound insight and learning with a style so simple and lucid that anyone with no more than a high school education can understand him. Only at two paragraphs (pp. 102-3), where he touches the subject of religion in the public schools, am I prompted to take exception. I feel that if Dr. Buttrick had thought this problem through he would recoil at the consequences that would flow from a change in the constitutional principle of church-state separation. I recommend this book equally to the layman, the educator and the theologian for its clarification of the great truths of the Christian faith.

A Thought for the Month

THE DEEPER CURRENT in American politics is plainly carrying the nation away from the ideals and the feeling of assurance which our people long cherished for the democratic process. We appear to be moving in the direction of a one-party system in which government will pass from the consent of the governed into the hands of those who control its machinery. The form of a two-party system we still have, but party leaders, for the sake of the spoils, tend to wash out the real political issues by making party victory paramount, thus, in effect, disfranchising a large section, if not a majority, of the electorate. With the vast expansion of government employment, the spoils of victory are enormously greater than ever before. Leaders of the two party machines combine in secret to trade offices and candidates in the primaries and at the polls. Huge blocs of special interests—labor, farmer, industrial, racial, colonial, religious and even criminal—absorb into their collectivities the independent judgment of the individual citizen upon which sound democracy rests. The balance of power in national elections is held by the tightly organized, cooperatively unified and notoriously corrupt party machines of the great cities. The supreme consideration in drafting party platforms and selecting candidats is confessedly to win the election. A phantom presidential candidate, equally at home in either party, gathers support in one party by a dark policy of silence on critical issues. The primaries are corrupted by urging voters to cross over from their own party and swell the votes for this amphibious candidate. These facts and much else indicate, it seems to me, that democracy is moving toward a one-party system which portends totalitarianism. President Truman's recent claim that he possesses inherent powers which place him above the Constitution is a portentous signpost pointing in that direction. Nothing less than an explosive combustion of political morality can arrest this trend.

Democracy is Not Working Too Well

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

THE LARGE RESPONSE of quatrains and limericks which followed our recent offer to pay the total sum of one dollar for each such literary achievement published in these pages has led your editors to do some serious thinking.

When do ministers write these lines anyway? In the early morning while waiting for the toast to pop? Late at night after the family has gone to bed? During the long pause when making pastoral calls between the time one pushes a doorbell and the opening of the door? While riding a streetcar? We don't know.

Ministers Need to Relax

But still we like to see them come. They tell us that a great host of preachers have learned the art of mental relaxation. We hope we are correct in assuming that only a relaxed mind could produce such combinations of verse and rhyme. At least we know that the pastor (unless his wife writes them for him) is taking time out from the daily routine. And, in our opinion, this is important if the preacher is to do his best work.

Too many of our colleagues are seven-day-a-week preachers. That's at least one day too many. They are worse violators of the Third or Fourth Commandment (depending on the Presbyterian or Lutheran count) than the members of their flock. The Lord said, "Six days shalt thou labor . . ." That "thou" includes the preacher.

True, the minister is not free to take Sunday as his day of rest and relaxation. But he owes it to himself, to his family and to his congregation to select another day for this purpose. In no respect are ministers exempt from the laws of the moral universe. Our Lord himself set the example of obedience to the moral and physical order in his wilderness experience—"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Proclaiming the Good News

"But," some readers will say, "why are you concerned? You're interested in *preaching*." Which brings us to our point: Too many pastors are coming into their pulpits with the steady unrelieved strain of problems and administrative demands written into every word they utter. Their inner state of mind is reflected so clearly that people cannot hear what they say. It seems reasonable to believe that the minister must exemplify in his own spirit and life the glorious good news of the gospel which he proclaims from his pulpit.

"Six days shalt thou labor . . ." When preachers take that commandment more seriously, we believe the sermons on the first day of the week will be doubly effective.

Keep the quatrains coming!

A. M. M.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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